

Quotes on
*Freedom,
the Constitution,
and Citizen Responsibility*

given by
Latter-day Prophets and Apostles

Now at our last annual conference in April, President McKay issued a statement on Communism.

Let me quote a few excerpts from that inspired statement, and you who have been misled into believing that you can somehow righteously avoid standing up for freedom, heed his counsel:

"Church members are at perfect liberty to act according to their own conscience in matters of safeguarding our way of life. They are, of course, encouraged to honor the high standards of the gospel and to work to preserve their own freedoms. They are free to participate in non-church meetings that are held to warn people of the threat of communism, or any other theory or principle that will deprive us of our free agency or individual liberties vouchsafed by the Constitution of the United States..."

"We, therefore, commend and encourage every person and every group who is sincerely seeking to study constitutional principles and awaken a sleeping and apathetic people to the alarming conditions that are rapidly advancing about us. We wish all of our citizens throughout the land were participating in some type of organized self-education in order that they could better appreciate what is happening and know what they can do about it."

I bear witness that this church position, given by our inspired leader - our prophet leader - is sound, timely and clear. The need for such counsel has never been greater.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," October 1966](#)

From my childhood days I have understood that we believe absolutely that the Constitution of our country is an inspired instrument, and that God directed those who created it and those who defended the independence of this nation.

Concerning this matter it is my frequent pleasure to quote the statement by Joseph Smith, regarding the Constitution: *"The Constitution of the United States is a glorious standard; it is founded in the wisdom of God. It is a heavenly banner; it is, to all those who are privileged with the sweets of liberty, like the cooling shades and refreshing waters of a great rock in a weary and thirsty land. It is like a great tree under whose branches men from every clime can be shielded from the burning rays of the sun."*

And such the Constitution of the United States must be to every faithful Latter-day Saint who lives under its protection.

-President Heber J. Grant, 1940, [The Improvement Era, 43:127](#)

To me, that statement of the Lord, 'I have established the Constitution of this land,' puts the Constitution of the United States in the position in which it would be if it were written in this book of Doctrine and Covenants itself. This makes the Constitution the word of the Lord to us.

-J. Reuben Clark, [Conference Report, April 1935, p. 93](#)

The societies in which many of us live have for more than a generation failed to foster moral discipline. They have taught that truth is relative and that everyone decides for himself or herself what is right. Concepts such as sin and wrong have been condemned as “value judgments.” As the Lord describes it, “Every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god” (D&C 1:16).

As a consequence, self-discipline has eroded and societies are left to try to maintain order and civility by compulsion. The lack of internal control by individuals breeds external control by governments.

-D. Todd Christofferson, [“Moral Discipline,” Ensign, November 2009](#)

The longer I live, and the more acquainted I am with men and things, the more I realize that these movements, and particularly that instrument called the Constitution of American Liberty, was certainly dictated by the spirit of wisdom, by a spirit of unparalleled liberality, and by a spirit of political utility. And if that Constitution be carried out by a just and wise administration, it is calculated to benefit not only all the people that are born under its particular jurisdiction, but all the people of the earth, of whatever nation, kindred, tongue, religion, or tradition, that may seek to take a shelter under its banner.

-Parley P. Pratt, 1853, [Journal of Discourses, 1:138](#)

I counsel you, I urge you, I plead with you, never, so far as you have voice or influence, permit any departure from the principles of governments on which this nation was founded, or any disregard of the freedoms which, by the inspiration of God our Father, were written into the Constitution of the United States.

-President Heber J. Grant, [Conference Report, October 1944, p. 12](#)

These two documents - the Declaration of Independence and Constitution of the United States - resting on the bedrock of the love of the Lord and of liberty, became the foundation of our Republic.

And from this foundation has come the greatest civilization on the face of the earth.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["This Nation Shall Endure," Address given at BYU, 12/4/73](#)

At the last General Conference of the Church, President McKay in his opening address said, “Efforts are being made to deprive man of his free agency, to steal from the individual his liberty. There has been an alarming increase in the abandoning of the ideals that constitute the foundation of the Constitution of the United States.”

Toward the close of his talk, our prophet, quoting Paul’s letter to Timothy regarding the preaching of the word said, “There should be no question in the mind of any true latter-day saint as to what we shall preach, the gospel plan of salvation.”

Then President McKay lists the areas our preaching should cover and admonishes us to include in our preaching what governments should or should not do in the interest of the preservation of our freedom.

Do we preach what governments should or should not do as part of the gospel plan as President McKay has urged? Or do we refuse to follow the prophet by preaching a limited gospel plan of salvation? The fight for freedom cannot be divorced from the gospel plan of salvation.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

It is a trite thing to say the world is in a mess. That we know, and out of a life of seventy-seven years I can say that so far as I can see, *it has never been in the mess that it is in today*. There have never before, in my life, been the powers of evil in such strength. Satan seems to have taken us over very largely, and we are more or less his tools. This is not the first time in our national history that we have been in trouble, and when I say "we", I mean the people. I am not talking of administrations. I am talking of us, we the people of the United States...

The trouble with the world is they do not want a prophet teaching righteousness. They want a prophet that will tell them that what they are doing is right, no matter how wrong it may be...

We do not lack a prophet; what we lack is a listening ear by the people and a determination to live as God has commanded. That is all we need. The way has been made perfectly clear.

-J. Reuben Clark, [Conference Report, October 1948, pp. 78-80](#)

I want to call attention to the fact that many winds of doctrine – social, economic, political – are blowing among the people. Individuals, ambitious for position and power, employing all kinds of propaganda, are and will continue to be busy among the people to win their support. Such things are not new. They have long existed and have been particularly prominent in periods of great distress and chaos... The dictatorships of Europe were born of the distresses of the people. Orderly government in these countries was secured at the price of individual liberty. There the state is everything, the individual only the tiniest cog in a gigantic machine.

Dangers ominously threaten in this great country of ours. Our government had one great test - the Civil War of the sixties. It will have other tests. But it will triumph so long as the people remain true to their heritage and maintain the ideals of liberty and justice set up by the fathers of our country.

-Joseph F. Merrill, [Conference Report, April 1937, pp. 41-2](#)

Recently a believer in the new deal, while repudiating communism and socialism, yet sought to justify our traveling along the road that inevitably leads thereto, the road we are now on, by invoking the thesis propounded by President Roosevelt, namely, that, in order to avoid trouble, we must travel along this road and yield principle after principle as their abandonment is demanded.

This plan is the equivalent of giving an unarmed robber, who has declared his intention of looting you, first a bludgeon and then a gun and then inviting him into your home in order to avoid trouble. Better take your trouble to begin with before he has the gun, the bludgeon, and is in your home, than after he is fully armed and inside. There will be less bloodshed in the end. No more fallacious policy, fatal to freedom, was ever inaugurated than this.

-J. Reuben Clark, Church News, 9/25/49

I am saying to you that to me the Constitution of the United States of America is just as much from my Heavenly Father as the Ten Commandments. When that is my feeling, I am not going to go very far away from the Constitution, and I am going to try to keep it where the Lord started it, and not let anti-Christ come into this country that began because people wanted to serve God.

-President George Albert Smith, [Conference Report, April 1948, p. 182](#)

Look back in retrospect on almost six thousand years of human history! Freedom's moments have been infrequent and exceptional. We must appreciate that we live in one of history's most exceptional moments - in a nation and a time of unprecedented freedom. Freedom as we know it has been experienced by perhaps less than one percent of the human family.

-President Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Constitution - A Heavenly Banner," Address given at BYU, 9/16/86](#)

There are present in our own United States influences, the avowed object of which is to sow discord and contention among men with the view of undermining, weakening, if not entirely destroying our constitutional form of government. Timely references and appropriate warnings have been given on the danger and evils of war.

There is another danger even more menacing than the threat of invasion of a foreign foe. It is the unpatriotic activities and underhanded scheming of disloyal groups and organizations within our own borders.

The government knowing who and where the enemy is can make ample preparation to meet his attacks. But the secret, seditious scheming of an enemy within our own ranks, hypocritically professing loyalty to the government, and at the same time plotting against it, is more difficult to deal with...

So it is in government. It is the enemy from within that is most menacing, especially when it threatens to disintegrate our established form of government.

-President David O. McKay, 1956, [The Instructor, 91:33](#)

...I say unto you with all the soberness I can, that we stand in danger of losing our liberties, and that once lost, only blood will bring them back; and once lost, we of this Church will, in order to keep the Church going forward, have more sacrifices to make and more persecutions to endure than we have yet known, heavy as our sacrifices and grievous as our persecutions of the past have been.

-J. Reuben Clark, [Conference Report, April 1944, p. 116](#)

The troubles of the world may largely be laid at the doors of those who are neither hot nor cold; who always follow the line of least resistance; whose timid hearts flutter at taking sides for truth.

As in the great Council in the heavens, so in the Church of Christ on earth, there can be no neutrality. We are, or we are not, on the side of the Lord.

-John A. Widtsoe, [Conference Report, April 1941, p. 117](#)

No greater immediate responsibility rests upon members of the Church, upon all citizens of this Republic and of neighboring Republics than to protect the freedom vouchsafed by the Constitution of the United States.

Let us, by exercising our privileges under the Constitution (1) Preserve our right to worship God according to the dictates of our conscience, (2) Preserve the right to work when and where we choose. No free man should be compelled to pay tribute in order to realize this God-given privilege. . . (3) Feel free to plan and to reap without the handicap of bureaucratic interference. (4) Devote our time, means, and life if necessary, to hold inviolate those laws which will secure to each individual the free exercise of conscience, the right and control of property, and the protection of life.

-David O. McKay, [Conference Report, April 1950, p. 37](#)

How many of you heard or saw the statement regarding some of these matters which our living prophet and his counselors gave us recently? I quote a part of it. Said the First Presidency,

We urge members of the Church and all Americans to begin now to reflect more intently on the meaning and importance of the Constitution, and of adherence to its principles... In these challenging days, when there are so many influences which would divert us, there is a need to rededicate ourselves to the lofty principles and practices of our Founding Fathers. (Church News, 9/22/73, p. 3)

Let us not permit these admonitions of our living prophets to fall on deaf ears. Let us, as they direct, learn the meaning and importance of our God-ordained Constitution. Let us rededicate ourselves to the lofty principles and practices of those wise men whom God raised up to give us our priceless freedom. Our liberties, our salvation, our well-being as a church and as a nation depend upon it.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["This Nation Shall Endure," Address given at BYU, 12/4/73](#)

The Prophet Joseph Smith said that "the Constitution of the United States was given by the inspiration of God." But good, virtuous and holy principles may be perverted by corrupt and wicked men. The Lord was opposed by Satan, Jesus had his Judas, and this nation abounds with traitors who ignore that sacred palladium of liberty and seek to trample it under foot. Joseph Smith said they would do so, and that when deserted by all, the elders of Israel would rally around its shattered fragments and save and preserve it inviolate.

-President John Taylor, 1880, [Journal of Discourses, 21:31](#)

Now I tell you it is time the people of the United States were waking up with the understanding that if they don't save the Constitution from the dangers that threaten it, we will have a change of government.

-Joseph Fielding Smith, [Conference Report, April 1950, p. 159](#)

Usually the Lord gives us the overall objectives to be accomplished and some guidelines to follow, but he expects us to work out most of the details and methods. The methods and procedures are usually developed through study and prayer and by living so that we can obtain and follow the promptings of the Spirit. Less spiritually advanced people, such as those in the days of Moses, had to be commanded in many things. Today those spiritually alert look at the objectives, check the guidelines laid down by the Lord and his prophets, and then prayerfully act—without having to be commanded “in all things.” This attitude prepares men for godhood...

Sometimes the Lord hopefully waits on his children to act on their own, and when they do not, they lose the greater prize, and the Lord will either drop the entire matter and let them suffer the consequences or else he will have to spell it out in greater detail. Usually, I fear, the more he has to spell it out, the smaller is our reward.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1965, pp. 121-2](#)

Some are offended when we bring our religion into the public square, yet the same people who insist that their viewpoints and actions be tolerated in society are often very slow to give that same tolerance to religious believers who also wish their viewpoints and actions to be tolerated. The general lack of respect for religious viewpoints is quickly devolving into social and political intolerance for religious people and institutions.

-Robert D. Hales, [“Preserving Agency, Protecting Religious Freedom,” Ensign, May 2015, p. 112](#)

Latter-day Saints, of all people, should stand firm in defense of freedom. Free agency has a special meaning to us. We know that without free agency there would be no progress. We all know that the gospel itself is based upon the principle of free agency. Yet there are some among us who have allowed themselves to slip to one side or the other, and they need to reorient themselves in line with the divine revelations we have received concerning the principle of freedom.

-Mark E. Petersen, [Conference Report, April 1946, p. 168](#)

When Benjamin Franklin, eighty years of age, stood before the Congress of the United States, trying to produce an instrument on which they could frame the Constitution, and they being about to abandon that effort, he made this appeal which won these men to God and to the accomplishment of the great purpose of establishing our Constitution:

"In the beginning of the contest with Great Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for divine protection. Our prayers, sir, were heard; and they were graciously

answered. All of us who were engaged in this struggle must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence in our favor. To that kind of Providence we owe this happy opportunity of consulting in peace on the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten that powerful Friend? Or do we imagine that we no longer need His assistance? I have lived, sir, a long time; and the longer I live the more convincing proofs I see of this truth - that God governs in the affairs of men; and if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? We have been assured, sir, in sacred writings, that except the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build it. I firmly believe this; and I also believe that without his concurring aid we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel."

This was the spirit of the men who established America. May God keep that spirit burning forever in the hearts of the men who continue to lead it.

-Melvin J. Ballard, [Conference Report, October 1928, p. 109](#)

Today two mighty forces are battling for the supremacy of the world. The destiny of mankind is in the balance. It is a question of God and liberty, or atheism and slavery. The success of communism means the destruction of religion. As stated by a government committee:

"Communism cannot dominate family life until it has first fought its way past the influence of religion upon the family. Communism cannot force its own brand of moral code upon a person without first destroying his moral code rooted in religion. Communism cannot make education a weapon in its hands so long as religion is secure in its own right to teach and to educate. Communism cannot dominate unless it has the power to remake the life of the people. It cannot ignore religion and do that."

-President David O. McKay, [Church News](#), 7/18/53

We have got to establish a government upon the principle of righteousness, justice, truth and equality and not according to the many false notions that exist among men. And then the day is not far distant when this nation will be shaken from centre to circumference...

When the people shall have torn to shreds the Constitution of the United States, the Elders of Israel will be found holding it up to the nations of the earth and proclaiming liberty and equal rights to all men, and extending the hand of fellowship to the oppressed of all nations. This is part of the programme, and as long as we do what is right and fear God, He will help us and stand by us under all circumstances.

-President John Taylor, 1879, [Journal of Discourses, 21:8](#)

Every citizen should insist on his or her constitutional right to exercise one's belief and to voice one's conscience on issues not only in the privacy of the home or the sanctity of the pulpit but also in the public square and in the halls of justice. These are the rights of all citizens, including people, leaders, and organizations who have religious beliefs.

-Jeffrey R. Holland, [Address given at Chapman University, 2/26/15](#)

In this day principles and practices and institutions and beliefs, grown vulnerable with age, are cast aside with contemptuous abandon, often for no other reason than that they are old. We have even invented some names for those who refuse to throw overboard the principles by which they have lived and flourished. In the language of the day, no doubt, James and Paul would be called reactionaries, anti-liberals, non-progressives.

-Albert E. Bowen, [Conference Report, October 1948, p. 85](#)

We must learn the principles of the Constitution and then abide by its precepts. Have we read the Constitution and pondered it? Are we aware of its principles? Could we defend it? Can we recognize when a law is constitutionally unsound? The Church will not tell us how to do this, but we are admonished to do it.

I quote Abraham Lincoln: *Let [the Constitution] be taught in schools, in seminaries, and in colleges; let it be written in primers, spelling-books, and in almanacs; let it be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in legislative halls, and enforced in courts of justice. And, in short, let it become the political religion of the nation.*

-President Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Constitution - A Heavenly Banner," Address given at BYU, 9/16/86](#)

The plain and simple issue now facing us in America is freedom or slavery... Our real enemies are communism and its running mate, socialism...

I want to say a few words about a few of the paths we are following that, if we move forward thereon, will inevitably lead us to socialism or communism, and these two are as like as two peas in a pod in their ultimate effect upon our liberties...

We may first observe that communism and socialism - which we shall hereafter group together and dub Statism - cannot live with Christianity, nor with any religion that postulates a Creator such as the Declaration of Independence recognizes. The slaves of Statism must know no power, no authority, no source of blessing, no God, but the State. The State must be supreme in everything.

-J. Reuben Clark, [Church News](#), 9/25/49

Now, in the last years, we in America have gone a long distance towards the adoption of the Roman concepts, and the abuses against property rights and human freedom and liberties which are possible under that system.

And let me say here and now, that in the whole history of the human race, from Adam until now, Tyranny has never come to live with any people with a placard on his breast bearing his name. He always comes in deep disguise, sometimes proclaiming an endowment of freedom, sometimes promising help to the unfortunate and downtrodden, not by creating something for those who do not have, but by robbing those who have. But Tyranny is always a wolf in sheep's clothing, and he always ends by devouring the whole flock, saving none.

So it is today.

-J. Reuben Clark, Church News, 9/21/46

Should it be of concern to us when the mouthpiece of the Lord keeps constantly and consistently raising his voice of warning about the loss of our freedom as he has over the years? There are two unrighteous ways to deal with his prophetic words of warning: you can fight them or you can ignore them. Either course will bring you disaster in the long run.

-Ezra Taft Benson, Conference Report, April 1965, p. 122

By and by, you will find they will tear the Constitution to shreds, as they have begun now; they won't have to begin; they have started long ago to rend the Constitution of our country in pieces; and in doing so they are letting loose and encouraging a principle which will react upon themselves with terrible consequences; for if lawmakers and administrators can afford to trample upon justice, equity, and the Constitution of this country, they will find thousands and tens of thousands who are willing to follow in their wake in the demolition of the rights of man, and the destruction of all principles of justice, and the safeguards of the nation. But we will stand by and maintain its principles and the rights of all men of every color, and every clime; we will cleave to the truth, live our religion and keep the commandments of God, and God will bless us in time and throughout the eternities that are to come.

-President John Taylor, 1884, Journal of Discourses, 26:39

As I see it, the leaders of these moves [*toward socialism or statism*] are in general office-hungry politicians, longing for the emoluments, influence, and power of public office. These candidates for office have courted, and are courting, the support of selfish, ambitious, and powerful leaders of labor unions, as well as the ne'er-do-well elements in our population.

Through the abundant and widespread use of misleading propaganda in which they have indulged and do indulge, the minds of the public in great measure have become confused and multitudes won over. Compare, if you please, half-century-old platforms of political parties with those that go out today under the same party names.

-Joseph F. Merrill, Conference Report, April 1950, pp. 61-2

The central issue in the premortal council was: Shall the children of God have untrammelled agency to choose the course they should follow, whether good or evil, or shall they be coerced and forced to be obedient?

Christ and all who followed him stood for the former proposition - freedom of choice; Satan stood for the latter - coercion and force.

The war that began in heaven over this issue is not yet over. The conflict continues on the battlefield of mortality. And one of Lucifer's primary strategies has been to restrict our agency through the power of earthly governments.

-President Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Constitution - A Heavenly Banner," Address given at BYU, 9/16/86](#)

And do not think that all these usurpations, intimidations, and impositions are being done to us through inadvertence or mistake. The whole course is deliberately planned and carried out; its purpose is to destroy the Constitution and our constitutional government; then to bring chaos, out of which the new Statism, with its slavery, is to arise, with a cruel, relentless, selfish, ambitious crew in the saddle, riding hard with whip and spur, a red-shrouded band of night riders for despotism...

I have tried to recall to you the distance we have travelled along the road to Statism, and to make the point that if we do not vigorously fight for our liberties, we shall go clear through to the end of the road and become another Russia, or worse.

-J. Reuben Clark, [Church News](#), 9/25/49

It is high time we realized the dangerous threat to America of creeping socialism as the ruthless comrade to atheistic communism. It is high time that we recognize creeping socialism for what it really is - a Red Carpet providing a royal road to communism.

A few months before coming to the United States Khrushchev is reported to have said: *"We cannot expect the Americans to jump from capitalism to communism, but we can assist their elected leaders in giving Americans small doses of socialism, until they suddenly awake to find they have communism."*

Certainly these words are plain and understandable – there is no reason to doubt that they mean just what they say. They should sound the alarm, but I am fearful that they fall on too many deaf ears.

While we might effectively bridle or destroy every so-called communist within our borders, we shall not vanquish this political virus, and its common forerunner, state socialism, so long as people are determined to achieve security through state-imposed materialistic schemes rather than through righteous living and wholesome activity as free men.

-Ezra Taft Benson, 1962, [The Red Carpet](#), p. 65

We must not let complacency blind our eyes to the real dangers threatening to destroy us. Judging from the written and expressed opinion of many of our leaders, our government is facing the greatest crisis in its history...

The nation is threatened with a disintegrating influence of moral turpitude. Honesty seems to be outmoded. The stability of the family life, I am sorry to say, is crumbling. Loyalty and patriotism have lost their ardor. 2/16/19 Crime and lawlessness, particularly among young people, are increasing alarmingly.

-President David O. McKay, [Church News](#), 3/12/52

As important as are all other principles of the gospel, it was the freedom issue which determined whether you received a body. To have been on the wrong side of the freedom issue during the war in heaven meant eternal damnation. How then can Latter-day Saints expect to be on the wrong side in this life and escape the eternal consequences?

The war in heaven is raging on earth today. The issues are the same: "Shall men be compelled to do what others claim is for their best welfare" or will they heed the counsel of the prophet and preserve their freedom?

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1965, p. 122-3](#)

Unlike the political opportunist, the true statesman values principle above popularity, and works to create popularity for those political principles which are wise and just.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Proper Role of Government," Address given at BYU, 10/21/68](#)

The Constitution was born, not only of the wisdom and experience of the generation that wrought it, but also out of the wisdom of the long generations that had gone before and which had been transmitted to them through tradition and the pages of history...

These were the horse and buggy days as they have been called in derision; these were the men who travelled in the horse drawn buggies and on horseback; but these were the men who carried under their hats, as they rode in the buggies and on their horses, a political wisdom garnered from the ages.

As giants to pygmies are they when placed alongside our political émigrés and their fellow travelers of today, who now traduce them with slighting word and contemptuous phrase.

-J. Reuben Clark, [Church News](#), 11/29/52

We honor the man that God honors. We honor Abraham Lincoln because we believe absolutely that God honored him and raised him up to be the instrument in His hands of saving the Constitution and the Union.

-President Heber J. Grant, 1940, [The Improvement Era, 43:127](#)

Communists dedicated to the destruction of our government are allowed to teach in our schools, to hold offices in labor unions, to run for public office. Recently an open and avowed leader of the Communist Party in one of our states ran for a county office and received 87,000 votes.

J. Edgar Hoover, the best-informed man in government on the socialist-communist conspiracy stated, *"We must now face the harsh truth that the objectives of communism are being steadily advanced because many of us do not realize the means used to advance them. No one who truly understands what it really is can be taken in by it. Yet the individual is handicapped by coming face-to-face with a*

conspiracy so monstrous he cannot believe it exists. The American mind simply has not come to a realization of the evil which has been introduced into our midst."

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

Consider the condition in the world, the number who are determined to take from the rich man not what belongs to themselves, but that which belongs to the others. God has permitted men to get wealth, and if they obtained it properly, it is theirs, and he will bless them in its use if they will use it properly...

We must not fall into the bad habits of other people. We must not get into the frame of mind that we will take what the other man has. Refer back to the ten commandments, and you will find one short paragraph, "Thou shalt not covet." That is what is the matter with a good many people today. They are coveting what somebody else has, when as a matter of fact, many of them have been cared for and provided with means to live by those very ones from whom they would take away property.

-President George Albert Smith, [Conference Report, October 1949, pp. 171-2](#)

Sovereignty in the people necessarily implies *responsibility* in the people. Instead of blaming their troubles on a king, on a cabal of military leaders, or on some distant group of wise men, citizens who are sovereign must share a measure of the burdens and responsibilities of governing.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Fundamentals of our Constitutions," Address given at Salt Lake City, UT, 9/17/2010](#)

Those of us who think "... all is well in Zion ..." (2 Nephi 28:21) in spite of Book of Mormon warning might ponder the words of Heber C. Kimball when he said: *"Yes, we think we are secure here in the chambers of these everlasting hills ... but I want to say to you, my brethren, the time is coming when we will be mixed up in these now peaceful valleys to that extent that it will be difficult to tell the face of a Saint from the face of an enemy against the people of God. Then is the time to look out for the great sieve, for there will be a great sifting time, and many will fall. For I say unto you there is a test, a Test, a TEST coming."*

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1963, p. 16](#)

The adversary presents his principles and arguments in the most approved style, and in the most winning tone, attended with the most graceful attitudes; and he is very careful to ingratiate himself into the favor of the powerful and influential of mankind, uniting himself with popular parties, floating into offices of trust and emolument by pandering to popular feeling, though it should seriously wrong and oppress the innocent. Such characters put on the manners of an angel, appearing as nigh like angels of light as they possibly can, to deceive the innocent and the unwary. The good which they do, they do it to bring to pass an evil purpose upon the good and honest followers of Jesus Christ.

-Brigham Young, 1866, [Journal of Discourses, 11:238-9](#)

Are we a political people? Yes, very political indeed. But what party do you belong to or would you vote for? I will tell you whom we will vote for: we will vote for the man who will sustain the principles of civil and religious liberty, the man who knows the most and who has the best heart and brain for a statesman; and we do not care a farthing whether he is a whig, a democrat, a barnburner, a republican, a new light or anything else. These are our politics.

-President Brigham Young, 1869, [Journal of Discourses, 13:149](#)

Let us instill into the hearts of our children the love of freedom. Teach them that to be free is as precious as life itself. Fight every influence... that would deprive an American citizen of the liberty vouchsafed by the Constitution. Liberty is truth - in truth we find liberty. You teachers, feel it in your hearts; instill it into the hearts of these precious children.

May the Church of Jesus Christ ever stand true to the ideals of freedom.

-President David O. McKay, [Church News](#), 7/11/53

President McKay has said that this nation has "traveled far into the soul-destroying road of socialism." Now if we understand what socialism embraces, then we will realize that this present Congress has passed more socialistic legislation recommended by a president than probably any other Congress in the history of our Republic.

At this particular moment in history, the United States is definitely threatened and every citizen should know about it. The warning of this hour should resound through the corridors of every American institution - schools, churches, the halls of Congress, press, radio, TV, and so far as I am concerned it will resound with God's help.

- Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

The battle against tyranny may have to begin at home... The vast majority of politicians are more concerned with political plums than with governmental principles. Unfortunately, love of man for man seldom directs men in public office. To our shame many men in public office, high and low, in the midst of personal dishonesty and corruption, pretend to serve their fellow men. They are all would-be dictators of different degrees. There is but one way to correct such evil - to clean house, to turn the rogues out of public office, and for you and other men of honest, righteous outlook to take their places.

The fight against covetousness and for human liberty will be part of your campaign for man's economic sufficiency. It will not be a pleasant job, perhaps, but there must be no hesitancy on the part of educated men in accepting the duty. In bringing about a better economic world you will indeed be of service to your "own generation."

-John A. Widtsoe, 1938, [The Improvement Era, 41:444](#)

I begin with a truth that is increasingly challenged: Religious teachings and religious organizations are vital to our free society and therefore deserving of special legal protection...

Our society is not held together primarily by law and its enforcement, but most importantly by those who voluntarily obey the unenforceable because of their internalized norms of righteous or correct behavior.

Religious belief in right and wrong is a vital influence to produce such voluntary compliance by a large number of our citizens. President George Washington spoke of this reality in his farewell address: "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports," he said. "Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Strengthening the Free Exercise of Religion," Address given on 5/16/13](#)

I support the doctrine of separation of church and state as traditionally interpreted to prohibit the establishment of an official national religion. But this does not mean that we should divorce government from any formal recognition of God. To do so strikes a potentially fatal blow at the concept of the divine origin of our rights, and unlocks the door for an easy entry of future tyranny. If Americans should ever come to believe that their rights and freedoms are instituted among men by politicians and bureaucrats, then they will no longer carry the proud inheritance of their forefathers, but will grovel before their masters seeking favors and dispensations – a throwback to the Feudal System of the Dark Ages.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Proper Role of Government," Address given at BYU, 10/21/68](#)

It seems that when men gain power on this earth, whether it be political or otherwise, they build up within themselves an egotism which destroys that simple faith in God which is so essential for men who are charged with important responsibilities in public life and elsewhere to possess...

Men will be led to follow the course which will ultimately destroy the Constitution rather than uphold it, against their very oaths of office, if they once throw off the cloak of morality and of religion. No one can fail to uphold the Constitution and be a good citizen, much less a worthy public officer. One who disregards the Constitution is not worthy of our patronage, politically or otherwise.

-Henry D. Moyle, [Conference Report, October 1950, p. 93](#)

I have wished, as did President Franklin D. Richards, that "we could have a goodly number of substantial young men growing up in our midst who would become skilled and mighty in the law, and who could go into any of the courts and set forth the true principles of justice and equity in all cases. We need more of such men. We do not want men to become lawyers, turn infidels and live for nothing but the little money they can make. We want to raise up a corps of young men armed with the spirit of the gospel, clothed with the holy priesthood, who can tell the judges in high places what the law is."

We have allowed our courts, through their anti-prayer, anti-God decisions, to outlaw in the schools the positive belief of the truths contained in the Declaration of Independence, the very foundation of our nation.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["This Nation Shall Endure," Address given at BYU, 12/4/73](#)

Self-government involves self-control, self-discipline, an acceptance of and the most unremitting obedience to correct principles. Its demands are commensurate with its high privileges. Duties are the inseparable companions of rights. No other form of government requires so high a degree of individual morality...

Before we import despotic principles into our own land, which are so raucously clamoring for admission, we would better count the costs.

-Albert E. Bowen, 1938, [The Improvement Era, 41:319](#)

We have been used to speaking of our political system (as envisioned by the founding fathers) as one in which opinions collide constitutionally, wherein vested interests cancel each other out, or tame each other before a safe majority is formed, or, at least, in which vested interests are brought out into the light by the democratic process. Indeed, this system has served us well. Winners and losers have played out the drama almost always within constitutional constraints, as turns have been taken at the levers of power by different majorities. What was not allowed for fully, however, nor could it be, is what happened when government, instead of remaining a referee, first became a participant and then became a possibly permanent majority itself.

It remains to be seen whether or not our nation can tame big government. There is, frankly, no precedent for dismantling, even partially, a welfare state, especially in a peaceful and constitutional way. Such a Goliath will not go quietly to surgery.

-Neal A. Maxwell, ["The Prohibitive Costs of a Value-Free Society," Ensign, October 1978](#)

The question may arise, "Must we not have law?" We have plenty of it, and sometimes we have a little too much. Legislators make too many laws; they make so many that the people do not know anything about them. Wise legislators will never make more laws than the people can understand.

-President Brigham Young, 1871, [Journal of Discourses, 14:83](#)

My final example of the importance of religion in our country concerns the origin of the Constitution. Its formation over 200 years ago was made possible by religious principles of human worth and dignity, and only those principles in the hearts of a majority of our diverse population can sustain that Constitution today.

I submit that religious values and political realities are so inter-linked in the origin and perpetuation of this nation that we cannot lose the influence of religion in our public life without seriously jeopardizing our freedoms.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Preserving Religious Freedom," Address given at Chapman University, 2/4/11](#)

I am not afraid of any foreign foe disturbing this nation. Our perils will all come from within. It is true the Prophet saw even the Constitution hanging as by a thread, but, thank the Lord, he never saw the thread break. He saw this people play a conspicuous part, to be a balance of power with others to preserve it.

For after all it is destined, according to the word of the Lord, to become the savior and blessing of all flesh, not only the peoples of the United States. And after the experiments with dictatorships and other methods, they will, at last, when they have learned their lesson and are prepared for it, be willing to receive the Lord's offering, after much suffering.

-Melvin J. Ballard, [Conference Report, October 1938, p. 106](#)

The most important single function of government is to secure the rights and freedoms of individual citizens.

-President Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Constitution - A Heavenly Banner," Address given at BYU, 9/16/86](#)

I come with (a) theme this morning: Two Contending Forces. Those forces have been known by different terms throughout the ages. In the beginning they were known as Satan on the one hand, and Christ on the other.

In Joshua's time they were called "gods of the Amorites," for one, and "the Lord," on the other. Paul spoke of "the works of the flesh" on the one hand, "fruits of the spirit" on the other. They are often spoken of as "selfishness" for one, "life of service," the other.

In these days, they are called "dominion by the state," on one hand, "personal liberty," on the other; communism on one hand, free agency on the other. I say to you, choose ye this day whom ye shall serve.

-President David O. McKay, ["Two Contending Forces," Address given at BYU, 5/18/60](#)

We are placed on this earth to work and the earth will give us a living. It is our duty to strive to till the earth, subdue matter, conquer the glebe, take care of the flocks and the herds. It is the government's duty to see that you are protected in it, and no other man has the right to deprive you of any of your privileges. But it is not the government's duty to support you.

I shall raise my voice as long as God gives me sound or ability, against the communistic idea that the government will take care of us all, and that everything belongs to the government. It is wrong! No

wonder, in trying to perpetuate that idea, that men become anti-Christ, because those teachings strike directly at the doctrines of the Savior.

No government owes you a living. You get it yourself by your own acts - never by trespassing upon the rights of your neighbor, never by cheating him. You put a blemish upon your character the moment you do. Even if you have the opportunity – they call it wise or shrewd in business – it makes it no less injurious to your spirit within. Amass your wealth, but as a means only to perpetuate God's kingdom on earth.

-President David O. McKay, Church News, 3/14/53

We now have lawmakers who go out willfully and intentionally to put upon our statute books legislation which is contrary to the Ten Commandments, and as they do so they are sowing seeds of destruction for that state or nation. We cannot prosper in wickedness, and any violation of the Ten Commandments is wrong...

The greatest weakness, the greatest curse we have in the world today is governments that try to remain in power by robbing us of our individualities, robbing us of our individual responsibility. We were not born into this world to be taken care of. It is not humanitarianism to rob us of the God given right to take care of ourselves. We should elect to live in keeping with the eternal laws of God.

-Henry D. Moyle, Church News, 11/17/62

Satan argued that men given their freedom would not choose correctly therefore he would compel them to do right and save us all. Today Satan argues that men given their freedom do not choose wisely; therefore a so-called brilliant, benevolent few must establish the welfare government and force us into a greater socialistic society. We are assured of being led into the promised land as long as we let them put a golden ring in our nose. In the end we lose our freedom and the promised land also. No matter what you call it—communism, socialism, or the welfare state—our freedom is sacrificed.

We believe the gospel is the greatest thing in the world; why then do we not force people to join the Church if they are not smart enough to see it on their own? Because this is Satan's way not the Lord's plan. The Lord uses persuasion and love.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1965, p. 123](#)

You have already heard much today about certain trends that would engulf us and destroy us. As President McKay was talking about the freedoms which we seem ever more eager to exchange for bread, my thoughts went back to old Israel, who, becoming hungry, went south to Egypt and found corn. That corn tasted so good to them that they continued eating the corn of another people. Eventually they accepted the grain and the security it symbolized in full payment for their liberty. Chains and abject slavery came to them and to their children and their children's children. Their suffering accelerated in intensity until a great Moses, under God, came to emancipate them. Thank the Lord for a deliverer! But how much nobler if people could accept the advice of God's leaders before the bondage comes!

...Not only the Israelites but more modern people have also fallen victim to this evil. Our pioneers came across the plains and developed a great commonwealth here by their toil and industry, frugality, savings. They were independent of all agencies except the Lord and their own hands and efforts, but many of their descendants have embraced, against counsel, the destructive philosophy that involved and well-nigh destroyed the ancients.

-Spencer W. Kimball, [Conference Report, April 1950, pp. 41-2](#)

We are now entering a period of incredible ironies. Let us cite but one of these ironies which is yet in its subtle stages: we shall see in our time a maximum if indirect effort made to establish irreligion as the state religion. It is actually a new form of paganism that uses the carefully preserved and cultivated freedoms of Western civilization to shrink freedom even as it rejects the value essence of our rich Judeo-Christian heritage...

[M. J. Sobran writes]: *“What the secularists are increasingly demanding, in their disingenuous way, is that religious people, when they act politically, act only on secularist grounds. They are trying to equate acting on religion with establishing religion. And – I repeat – the consequence of such logic is really to establish secularism. It is in fact, to force the religious to internalize the major premise of secularism: that religion has no proper bearing on public affairs.”*

Brothers and sisters, irreligion as the state religion would be the worst of all combinations. Its orthodoxy would be insistent and its inquisitors inevitable. Its paid ministry would be numerous beyond belief. Its Caesars would be insufferably condescending. Its majorities – when faced with clear alternatives – would make the Barabbas choice, as did a mob centuries ago when Pilate confronted them with the need to decide.

-Neal A. Maxwell, [“Meeting the Challenges of Today,” Address given at BYU, 10/10/78](#)

Our Republic and Constitution are being destroyed while the enemies of freedom are being aided. How? In at least ten ways:

1. By diplomatic recognition and aid, trade and negotiations with the communists;
2. By disarmament of our military defenses;
3. By destruction of our security laws and the promotion of atheism by decisions of the Supreme Court;
4. By loss of sovereignty and solvency through international commitments and membership in world organizations;
5. By undermining of local law enforcement agencies and congressional investigating committees;
6. By usurpations by the executive and judicial branches of our government;
7. By lawlessness in the name of civil rights;
8. By a staggering national debt with inflation and corruption of the currency;
9. By a multiplicity of executive orders and federal programs which greatly weaken local and state governments;
10. By the sacrifice of American manhood by engaging in wars we apparently have no intention of winning.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

Is not the struggle for public office and power rapidly growing in our country? A friend of mine remarked that our politics had ceased to be based on a set of definite principles and clearly defined policies but on sails set to catch the popular winds. And is it not true that the responsibility in government of political parties is growing less, perhaps in about the same proportion as the struggle for office is growing greater? Ready-tongued and witty-minded ambitious politicians get nominated for office by stirring up the people with glowing promises of unearned favors and benefits to be secured at the expense of others than themselves.

And most people can be rather easily misled by the sophistry of ready-tongued advocates because the factors that enter into our complex business and economic questions are so numerous and highly involved that even experts can hardly understand and rightly appraise them. Hence what is the likelihood of us lay people understanding what can we do? I'll tell you what we do do – become blinded, confused, and misled by the guile of the cunning seeker for office and power.

-Joseph F. Merrill, [Church News](#), 12/26/36

Remember that, after the great political nations of this world have crumbled and fallen to decay, the Church of Jesus Christ, with which you are identified, will be in existence, and the Master Himself will continue to be its head. Let us not become so worked up in our feelings that we shut our eyes to the greater blessings, to the most important thing, the salvation of our souls.

Let us not ally ourselves with bodies of men who would tear down and break in pieces this government that was founded under the inspiration of God the Eternal Father. We cannot belong to any political party that is opposed to this free government and be consistent Latter-day Saints.

-George Albert Smith, [Conference Report, April 1914, p. 12](#)

In the Church, there are members who favor the Democratic party. There are other members who sincerely believe and advocate the principles and ideals of the Republican party. The First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and other officers who constitute the General Authorities of the Church, preside over members of both political parties.

The President is President of the Church, not favoring in this election either political party. The welfare of all members of the Church is equally considered by the President, his Counselors, and the General Authorities. Both political parties will be treated impartially... This does not mean, however, that error will be condoned. Teachings and ideologies subversive to the fundamental principles of this great Republic, which are contrary to the Constitution of the United States, or which are detrimental to the progress of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, will be condemned, whether advocated by Republicans or Democrats.

-President David O. McKay, [Conference Report, October 1952, pp. 129-30](#)

Let us never forget that today we are in the biggest battle ever staged. Our opponent is socialism - the welfare state - and the penalty of failure is enslavement. We must keep strong spiritually, morally, and economically as individuals, families, communities, and as a nation. Only in this course is safety.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Pay Thy Debt, and Live," Address given at BYU, 2/28/62](#)

I have never yet found anyone who can draw the dividing line between our spiritual and temporal interests, neither do I expect to. I believe that it is quite as necessary that we should attend to the temporal, as it is to attend to the spiritual duties which devolve upon us, and vice versa. It will not do to devote all our time to the spiritual part, nor all to the temporal alone. We must not run to extremes, but we should carry on the work of the Lord committed to us, in all its parts, or bearings.

-Joseph F. Smith, 1879, [Journal of Discourses, 20:342](#)

We also find the majority of people are still respectful of basic moral values. But make no mistake: there are also people who are determined to both destroy faith and reject any religious influence in society. Other evil people exploit, manipulate, and tear down society with drugs, pornography, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, robbery, and dishonest business practices. The power and influence of these people is very large even if they are relatively small in number...

In our increasingly unrighteous world, it is essential that values based on religious belief be part of the public discourse. Moral positions informed by a religious conscience must be accorded equal access to the public square.

Under the constitutions of most countries, a religious conscience may not be given preference, but neither should it be disregarded. Religious faith is a store of light, knowledge, and wisdom and benefits society in a dramatic way when adherents engage in moral conduct because they feel accountable to God.

-Quentin L. Cook, ["Let There Be Light!" Ensign, November 2010](#)

Do you not think that we need revelations about government as much as anything else? I think we do. I think we need God to dictate to us as much in our national and social affairs as in church matters.

-John Taylor, 1872, [Journal of Discourses, 15:176](#)

We owe at least the consideration to be loyal to this country and to spurn with all the soul that is within us the scheming disloyal citizens who would undermine our Constitution, or who would deprive the individual of his liberty vouchsafed by that great document, and some of our men who have come up through the public schools are doing just that. Let every loyal member of the Church look down with scorn upon any man or woman who would undermine that Constitution.

-President David O. McKay, [Church News, 5/29/54](#)

We are fast approaching that moment prophesied by Joseph Smith when he said: *Even this Nation will be on the very verge of crumbling to pieces and tumbling to the ground and when the Constitution is upon the brink of ruin this people will be the Staff up[on] which the Nation shall lean and they shall bear the Constitution away from the very verge of destruction.*

Will we be prepared? Will we be among those who will "bear the Constitution away from the very verge of destruction"?

-President Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Constitution - A Heavenly Banner," Address given at BYU, 9/16/86](#)

These Revolutionary patriots were the men who fabricated the Constitution, the document which the political emigres amongst us, immigrants from despotism and ignorant of free institutions, hold up to ridicule as the offspring of a rude, almost semi-barbarous people, untaught and untrained in the art of government. Indeed, their scoffing has become so loud virulent that some among us have come to feel that we must apologize for that divinely inspired character of liberties and free institutions. Some among us seem almost to cringe with shame when they feel the need of naming the Constitution.

But I declare to you, for what it may be worth, that it is what Gladstone said it was, the greatest document "ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man," a document which, according to my belief, the Lord himself "suffered to be established, and should be maintained for the rights and protection of all flesh, according to just and holy principles," established "by the hands of wise men whom the Lord raised up for that purpose;" and as the Lord said, this land was redeemed by the shedding of blood. I say to you that the price of liberty is and always has been blood, human blood, and if our liberties are lost, we shall never regain them except at the price of blood. They must not be lost!

-J. Reuben Clark, [Church News](#), 11/29/52

One regrettable development is the increasing number of government programs embracing our youth. President Clark, former Undersecretary of State, former ambassador, and a great constitutional statesman, and counselor to three presidents of the Church put it well when he said, "Our government, with its liberty and free institutions, will not long survive a government-trained and supervised youth. Such youth can be a revolutionary machine."

And let me warn you, if these programs are fully introduced here in our midst, we will suffer the tragic consequences.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

I want to raise my voice to you and say, our Heavenly Father raised up the very men that framed the Constitution of the United States. He said He did. He gave to us the greatest Palladian of human rights that the world knows anything about, the only system whereby people could worship God according to the dictates of their consciences without, in any way, being molested when the law, itself, was in effect...

Yet, we have people who would like to change that and bring some of those forms of government that have failed absolutely to make peace and happiness and comfort any other place in the world, and exchange what God has given to us – the fullness of the earth and the riches of liberty and happiness. Yet, there are those who go around whispering and talking and saying, 'Let us change this thing.'

-President George Albert Smith, [Conference Report, April 1948, p. 182](#)

This is an election year. Upon you devolves the responsibility of choosing our servants in government, for whoever is elected to preside over this country as President, as senators, members of the House of Representatives, are your servants, not your rulers. And do not be slothful on the day of election, but come out and exercise your right and privilege as a citizen of this great republic. What doth it profit though a man say he hath faith not works? Here we should prove ourselves loyal citizens.

-President David O. McKay, [Conference Report, April 1952, p. 128](#)

In this country we have a history of tolerant diversity – not perfect but mostly effective at allowing persons with competing visions to live together in peace. Most of us want effective ways to resolve differences without anger and with mutual understanding and accommodation. We all lose when an atmosphere of anger or hostility or contention prevails. We all lose when we cannot debate public policies without resorting to epithets, boycotts, firings, and other intimidation of our adversaries. We need to promote the virtue of civility.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Religious Freedom in a Pluralistic Society," Claremont Graduate University, 3/25/16](#)

At a time when most of our public discourse concerns rights, it may seem strange to speak of responsibilities. But a democratic republic needs patriotic citizens who are fulfilling their responsibilities as well as claiming their rights. No society is so secure that it can withstand continued demands for increases in citizen rights without producing corresponding increases in the fulfillment of citizen responsibilities.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Some Responsibilities of Citizenship," Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 7/3/94](#)

I do not fear the small, hard corps of subversives here in America so much as I do those who do not see the danger to freedom that is inherent in more and more centralization of power in government - and I fear especially those who do see the trend and do not care.

-Ezra Taft Benson, 1962, [The Red Carpet](#), p. 159

A news magazine writer asked me the other day during an interview concerning my belief in the Constitution of our country. I replied that I felt it was inspired, that both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States were brought forth under the inspiration of God to establish and sustain the freedom of the people of this nation.

I told him that I looked upon the Founding Fathers as men who believed in God, as men who prayed to God, as men who recognized God and wished to do His will. What a singular and remarkable group they were! As I look across the world today, I search in vain for such a group as walked together across the stage of history when this nation was born.

-President Gordon B. Hinckley, [Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 1997](#)

No, brethren, socialism is not the United Order. However, notwithstanding my abhorrence of it, I am persuaded that socialism is the wave of the present and of the foreseeable future. It has already taken over or is contending for control in most nations...

We here in the United States, in converting our government into a social welfare state, have ourselves adopted much of socialism. Specifically, we have to an alarming degree adopted the use of the power of the state in the control and distribution of the fruits of industry. We are on notice, according to the words of the President, that we are going much further, for he is quoted as saying: *"We're going to take all the money we think is unnecessarily being spent and take it from the 'haves' and give it to the 'have nots.'"* (Lyndon B. Johnson, 3/24/64)

-Marion G. Romney, [Conference Report, April 1966, pp. 97-98](#)

The proper function of government is limited only to those spheres of activity within which the individual citizen has the right to act. By deriving its just powers from the governed, government becomes primarily a mechanism for defense against bodily harm, theft and involuntary servitude. It cannot claim the power to redistribute the wealth or force reluctant citizens to perform acts of charity against their will. Government is created by man. No man can delegate a power he does not possess. The creature cannot exceed the creator.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Proper Role of Government," Address given at BYU, 10/21/68](#)

In stabilized character, established by a consistent course of conduct, directed by adherence to right principles, lies the only safety of the state. It is that which gives to the individual citizen the power to govern himself from within. If we cannot build up a race of individuals capable of governing themselves from within, we shall not have people who can be governed by authority exterior to themselves.

-Albert E. Bowen, 1936, [The Improvement Era, 39:346](#)

I would subject every representative of the American people, from the small community level, to state, national and international positions, to the scrutiny and test of virtuous, moral standards. I would. Some will say, you are discounting the value of brains and "know-how" in this intricate business of government and sociology. I am not. I stand in awe in the presence of a great mind with superior intelligence devoted to human welfare. We are greatly dependent upon such minds, but if I had to make a choice, which I ought not to have to make, between talent and integrity, I would choose integrity and virtue, for without them we are lost.

-Stephen L. Richards, [Conference Report, October 1953, p. 101](#)

One of the main thrusts of the communist drive in America today is through the so-called civil rights movement. Now there is nothing wrong with civil rights. It's what is being done in the name of civil rights that is shocking...

I warn you unless we wake up soon and do something about the conspiracy, the communist-inspired civil rights riots of the past will pale into insignificance compared to the bloodshed and destruction that lie ahead in the near future.

Do not think the members of the church shall escape. The Lord has assured us that the church will still be here when He comes. But has the Lord assured us that we can avoid fighting for freedom and still escape unscathed, both temporally and spiritually? We cannot escape the eternal consequences of our preexistent position on freedom. What makes us think we can escape it here?

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

...There is current in the world today a school of thought which asserts that there is no such thing as universal principles of right as opposed to wrong...

This is a deadly paralyzing notion to plant in the minds of people and particularly the youthful and immature. It strikes down belief that man is a moral being with a purpose and a destiny and commensurate responsibilities. It releases one who accepts it from all restraint of conscience.

It provides him with an allegedly scientific but basely false assurance that he is in no wise responsible for his actions however vile they may be since they are, after all, but in the course of nature. Let such a notion as that gain general currency and you have dealt a devastating blow to all organized society. A free government could no longer exist, for its perpetuity must depend upon the moral integrity of its citizens. Only an absolute, iron-bound despotism could deal with a creation like that.

-Albert E. Bowen, [Conference Report, October 1944, pp. 156-7](#)

We celebrate the freedom of our nation. We hold this festival in remembrance of this greatest of all boons and blessings. May we look to Him as the author of our liberty. Is it too much to expect that prayer, public and private, be once again established in our national and private lives? Then with a general acknowledgement of the God in whom we put our trust, we may expect a diminution in our social problems, an increase in public and private morality, and a renewed sense of freedom and liberty.

-President Gordon B. Hinckley, [Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 1997](#)

Rights are either God-given as part of the divine plan, or they are granted by government as part of the political plan. If we accept the premise that human rights are granted by government, then we must be willing to accept the corollary that they can be denied by government. I, for one, shall never accept that premise.

-President Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Constitution - A Heavenly Banner," Address given at BYU, 9/16/86](#)

I maintain that the teachings and free practice of religion are essential to a free and prosperous society. I also maintain that religious values and political realities are so interlinked in the origin and perpetuation of this nation that we cannot lose the influence of religion and religious bodies in our public life without seriously jeopardizing our freedom and prosperity.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Religious Freedom in a Pluralistic Society," Claremont Graduate University, 3/25/16](#)

What has caused the current public and legal climate of mounting threats to religious freedom? I believe the cause is not legal but cultural and religious. I believe the diminished value being attached to religious freedom stems from the ascendancy of moral relativism.

More and more of our citizens support the idea that all authority and all rules of behavior are man-made and can be accepted or rejected as one chooses. Each person is free to decide for himself or herself what is right and wrong. Our children face the challenge of living in an increasingly godless and amoral society...

Moral relativism leads to a loss of respect for religion and even to anger against religion and the guilt that is seen to flow from it. As it diminishes religion, it encourages the proliferation of rights that claim ascendancy over the free exercise of religion.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Preserving Religious Freedom," Address given at Chapman University, 2/4/11](#)

I do not lift my voice against the great and glorious government guaranteed to every citizen by our Constitution, but against those corrupt administrators who trample the Constitution and just laws under their feet.

-President Brigham Young, 1857, [Journal of Discourses, 5:232](#)

I wonder if we freeborn Americans appreciate what it is to have the right to vote, to express by our vote our choice of those who are to rule over us. No, thank heaven, not to *rule* over us - to *serve* us in the service of the government. For *you, the electorate*, are the rulers of this great Republic.

Those who have taken out their citizenship I think appreciate it even more than some of us who have it by birth.

-President David O. McKay, [Conference Report, October 1956, p. 124](#)

Now, the Lord knew that before the gospel could flourish there must first be an atmosphere of freedom. This is why he first established the Constitution of this land through gentiles whom he raised up before he restored the gospel.

In how many communist countries today are we doing missionary work, building chapels, etc.? And yet practically every one of those countries have been pushed into communism and kept under communism

with the great assistance of evil forces which have and are operating within our own country and neighboring lands.

Yes, were it not for the tragic policies of governments—including our own—tens of millions of people murdered and hundreds of millions enslaved since World War II would be alive and free today to receive the restored gospel.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1965, p. 123](#)

From my point of view the right to vote imposes on everyone who has this right the obligation to make a full, fair, and unprejudiced study of the issues involved in an election, and then support candidates who stand for the principles and measures that the voter sincerely and honestly believes will be for the best good of all the people and therefore for the best interests of the country as a whole. If selfishness, greed, unrighteous motives, and ignoble ambition shall dominate in our elections, the freedom that has been the pride and glory of Americans will vanish - many people will be practically enslaved, as is the case in Russia today - so historians predict.

-Joseph F. Merrill, [Conference Report, October 1949, p. 36](#)

We cannot conceive a better form of earthly government than ours. This is the feeling that we have. We want this government preserved. We want all its liberties maintained. We know that if they are, we will have everything that we can ask for. Therefore, as a people we are utterly opposed to all forms of organization that contemplate, even in secret places, anything that will effect unfavorably the government of the United States.

We are opposed to all factions that look to disorganization or to the impairing in any manner of the form of government and the liberties that we enjoy under it as citizens of the Republic. Our constant effort is to keep our people from joining these organizations.

-George Q. Cannon, 1894, [The Deseret Weekly](#), 48:478

Every Latter-day Saint has spiritual obligations in four basic areas: his home, his church, his job, and his citizenship responsibility. Each of these areas should receive consistent attention although not necessarily equal time. Are we doing our duty in these important fields? What about our citizenship responsibility - our obligation to safeguard our freedom and preserve the Constitution...

The enemy is amongst and upon us. Zion must awake and arouse herself. We, the elders of Israel, can be and should be, the leaven in the loaf for freedom...

May we as a free people face courageously the challenging responsibility which faces us. "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing." (Edmund Burke)

We are not here to sit by complacently while our birthright of freedom is exchanged for a mess of socialist-communist pottage.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1963, p. 113](#)

If the Latter-day Saints were one politically and financially, and in all their endeavors to build up the kingdom of God, there would be a great power in the midst of this people.

-President Brigham Young, 1866, [Journal of Discourses, 11:275](#)

“Next to being one in worshiping God,” says President McKay, “there is nothing in this world upon which this church should be more united than in upholding and defending the Constitution of the United States!”

There are some who would have us believe that the final test of the rightness of a course is whether everyone is united on it. But the church does not seek unity, simply for unity’s sake. The unity for which the Lord prayed and which President McKay speaks is the only unity which God honors – that is, unity in righteousness, unity in principle.

We cannot compromise good and evil in an attempt to have peace and unity in the Church, any more than the Lord could have compromised with Satan in order to avoid the War in Heaven.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

As citizens we have the privilege and duty of electing office holders and influencing public policy. Participation in the political process affects our communities and nation today and in the future.

Latter-day Saints as citizens are to seek out and then uphold leaders who will act with integrity and are wise, good, and honest. Principles compatible with the gospel may be found in various political parties.

Therefore, in this election year, we urge you to register to vote, to study the issues and candidates carefully and prayerfully, and then to vote for and actively support those you believe will most nearly carry out your ideas of good government.

The Church affirms its neutrality regarding political parties, platforms, and candidates. The Church also affirms its constitutional right of expression on political and social issues.

-Letter from the First Presidency, 9/11/2008

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

These words are simple and direct. Their message and meaning appear to be clear. But through the years, presidents, Congress, and the courts have interpreted them in so many different ways that many people today have no sense of the perspective upon which they were based.

Believe it or not, at one time the very notion of government had less to do with politics than with virtue. According to James Madison, often referred to as the father of the Constitution: “We have staked the whole future of American civilization not upon the power of the government—far from it. We have

staked the future of all of our political institutions upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God."

...Nearly one hundred years later, Abraham Lincoln responded to a question about which side God was on during the Civil War with this profound insight: "I am not at all concerned about that, for I know that the Lord is always on the side of the right. But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I and this nation should be on the Lord's side."

Madison, Washington, and Lincoln all understood that democracy cannot possibly flourish in a moral vacuum and that organized religion plays an important role in preserving and maintaining public morality.

-M. Russell Ballard, ["Religion in a Free Society," Ensign, October 1992](#)

U.S. citizens have an inspired Constitution, and therefore, what? Does the belief that the U.S. Constitution is divinely inspired affect citizens' behavior toward law and government? It should and it does.

U.S. citizens should follow the First Presidency's counsel to study the Constitution. They should be familiar with its great fundamentals: the separation of powers, the individual guarantees in the Bill of Rights, the structure of federalism, the sovereignty of the people, and the principles of the rule of law. They should oppose any infringement of these inspired fundamentals.

They should be law-abiding citizens, supportive of national, state, and local governments. The twelfth Article of Faith declares: "We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law."

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["The Divinely Inspired Constitution," Ensign, February 1992](#)

We all should know by now what President McKay has said about liberty-loving peoples' greatest responsibility. We've heard him tell of our drift toward socialism and communism. We know of his feelings regarding recent tragic decisions of the Supreme Court. We know the Church's position supporting right to work laws and the Church's opposition to programs of federal aid to education. These and many more things has President McKay told us that involve this great struggle against state slavery and the anti-Christ. Now, inasmuch as all these warnings have come through the only mouthpiece of the Lord on the earth today there is one major question we should ask ourselves. Assuming we are living a life so we can know, then what does the Holy Spirit have to say about it?

We are under obligation to answer this question. God will hold us responsible.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1963, p. 19](#)

Our Savior's Second Coming is drawing nearer. Let us not delay in this great cause [of protecting religious freedom]. Remember Captain Moroni, who hoisted the title of liberty inscribed with the words "In memory of our God, our religion, and freedom, and our peace, our wives, and our children." Let us

remember the people's response: exercising their agency, they "came running together" with a covenant to act.

My beloved brothers and sisters, don't walk! Run! Run to receive the blessings of agency by following the Holy Ghost and exercising the freedoms God has given us to do His will.

-Robert D. Hales, ["Preserving Agency, Protecting Religious Freedom," Ensign, May 2015, p. 113](#)

One analyst of political things has observed that in addition to the happy consequences of democracy, the system tends to produce two unwanted side effects – *bureaucracy* and *apathy*. These are not inevitable side effects, but they are probably side effects. We are experiencing these symptoms in America. Yet, alas, Thomas Jefferson said our republic's future rested on the assumption that our citizens would remain *attentive* and *informed*.

-Neal A. Maxwell, ["The Prohibitive Costs of a Value-Free Society," Ensign, October 1978](#)

The love of mankind is an exalted sentiment, and patriotism for home and country is worthy of a place in the bosoms of the greatest and best of mankind.

-President Brigham Young, 1863, [Journal of Discourses, 10:249](#)

In this time of deadly peril we must choose men and women to represent us in our government who have attained an inner attunement of mind, heart and soul with God. Only these people have anchors firmly rooted and strong enough to withstand the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. They, only, have the inner sense of direction, stability of spirit and firmness of character essential to our survival.

We must not place in positions of trust cheap opportunists who will sell their souls for a mess of pottage. Rather we should place in public office men and women who place the love of God first in their lives and who, as a consequence, can serve their fellow men with true wisdom.

Not cheap politicians but statesmen are needed today. Not opportunists but men and women of principle must be demanded by the people. In this time of great stress and danger we must place only those dedicated to the preservation of our Constitution, our American Republic, and responsible freedom under God.

"Oh God, give us men with a mandate higher than the ballot box."

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["A Race Against Time," Address given at BYU, 12/10/64](#)

Justice, temperance, and truth are the fundamental doctrines of all good government; and if I see those doctrines threatened, is it not my duty to oppose their enemies? It seems to me that it is...

I do not wish to be regarded as an agitator; I do not wish to be regarded as an extremist; but my brethren and sisters, if I see these things as I move about among the cities of this country, is it my duty

to be silent, or is it my duty, as a professed teacher of righteousness, to call attention to them, in order that they may be corrected?

When men sell their votes by thousands, and ambitious men buy them in order that they may be magnified before the people, and attain to those places of trust where your very lives and liberties are at stake, as occurred in the last election in one of the greatest states of this republic, it seems to me that there is something to do; and if I see these forces which are making as surely for the disintegration of governments that have existed before it, I cannot restrain the feeling which I have that it is my duty to call attention to them, not to complain, but in the hope that seeing them we may reform.

-Anthony W. Ivins, [Conference Report, April 1915, p. 114](#)

It is difficult for Americans to understand the danger to our liberty. "It is generally outside the range of our experience." But we live today in an age of peril. We are threatened with the loss not only of material wealth but of something far more precious - our liberty itself.

Never before in the history of our country has there been a greater need for all of our people to take time to discover what is happening in the world. Every day decisions are being made affecting the lives of millions of human beings.

We as a people have never known bondage. Liberty has always been our blessed lot. Few of us have ever seen people who have lost their freedom - their liberty. And when reminded of the danger of losing our liberty and independence our attitude has usually been: *It cannot happen here.*

We must never forget that nations may, and usually do, sow the seeds of their own destruction while enjoying unprecedented prosperity.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1962, p. 14](#)

All through the last political campaign they were saying, "Why doesn't the church tell us how we should vote?" If the Church had done that, we would have a lot of Democrats or Republicans who would have wanted to apostatize. We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers and magistrates. We are told to obey the laws of God and we will have no need to break the laws of the land. When they would ask me who to vote for in the coming election, I would tell them to read Mosiah 29 and Section 134 of the Doctrine and Covenants, pray about that, and any Latter-day Saint could know who to vote for in any given election. It is just as simple as that.

-Harold B. Lee, ["Doing the Right Things for the Right Reasons," Address given at BYU, 4/19/61](#)

One of the greatest discourses that I have ever heard or read on how to avoid being deceived was given from this pulpit during the priesthood session of the October 1960 semiannual conference by Elder Marion G. Romney... During the talk Elder Romney stated that there was no guarantee that the devil will not deceive a lot of men who hold the priesthood. Then [he] states, "...Free agency is the principle against which Satan waged his war in heaven. It is still the front on which he makes his most furious, devious, and persistent attacks. That this would be the case was foreshadowed by the Lord...

"You see, at the time he was cast out of heaven, his objective was (and still is) 'to deceive and to blind men and to lead them captive at his will.' This he effectively does to as many as will not hearken unto the voice of God. His main attack is still on free agency. When he can get men to yield their agency, he has them well on the way to captivity.

"We who hold the priesthood must beware concerning ourselves, that we do not fall into the traps he lays to rob us of our freedom. We must be careful that we are not led to accept or support in any way any organization, cause or measure which, in its remotest effect, would jeopardize free agency, whether it be in politics, government, religion, employment, education, or any other field. It is not enough for us to be sincere in what we support. We must be right!"

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1963, p. 16](#)

To our Church members we say: Communism is not the United Order, and bears only the most superficial resemblance thereto; Communism is based upon intolerance and force, the United Order upon love and freedom of conscience and action; Communism involves forceful despoliation and confiscation, the United Order voluntary consecration and sacrifice.

Communists cannot establish the United Order, nor will Communism bring it about. The United Order will be established by the Lord in His own due time and in accordance with the regular prescribed order of the Church.

-First Presidency Letter, 1936, [The Improvement Era, 39:488](#)

...[P]atriotism is more than flag-waving and fireworks. It is how we respond to public issues. If we ask only, "What's in this proposal for me? What do I get out of it?" we are not patriotic and we are not good citizens. But if we ask, "Is this right? Is it good for the American people? Would it preserve and strengthen our freedom?" then we deserve to stand in the company of Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln. Patriotism is trying always to give more to the nation than we receive. It is selfless service.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [The Red Carpet](#), p. 96

I believe that it is a proper time to warn our people against the dangers that lie ahead, from associating themselves with any institution that does not make for the common good of humanity. I concur with my brethren that there are many institutions in the world that do make for the uplift and the advancement of mankind; I believe that many of our Father's children who are without the pale of the Church, are instrumental in carrying on his work. I cannot but think that he has let his Spirit rest upon good men, the world over, to advance the cause of Truth. It seems to me that it must be so. We, I believe, should unite with and foster every good movement, every good cause, everything that tends to advance the interests of the gospel and of truth in the world; but I think that we should preserve ourselves safe, inviolate, compact against incursions of all kinds, of influences of all kinds of organizations that in any way will tend to disrupt us.

-Stephen L. Richards, [Conference Report, October 1919, p. 103-4](#)

(A) basic principle we must understand is that people are superior to the governments they form. Since God created people with certain inalienable rights, and they, in turn, created government to help secure and safeguard those rights, it follows that the people are superior to the creature they created.

-President Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Constitution - A Heavenly Banner," Address given at BYU, 9/16/86](#)

You and I have heard all our lives that the time may come when the Constitution may hang by a thread. I do not know whether it is a thread or a small rope by which it now hangs, but I do know that whether it shall live or die is now in the balance.

-J. Reuben Clark, [Conference Report, October 1942, p. 58](#)

When foundation principles are discarded, then shifting, vagrant, opportunistic substitutes for principles take control and precisely because they are opportunistic they must shift with the vagaries of changing popular moods. Stability - a steady march forward toward a fixed goal - no longer is found.

It is for us to stand by the tried and proved principles of religion and the tried and proved governmental principles which have so blessed our land.

-Albert E. Bowen, [Conference Report, October 1944, p. 158](#)

Think of the impact for good we could have if we all united behind the prophets in preserving our Constitution. Yet witness the sorry spectacle of those presently of our number who have repudiated the inspired counsel of our prophet when he has opposed federal aid to education and asked support for the right to work laws.

It is too much to suppose that all the Priesthood at this juncture will unite behind the Prophet in the fight for freedom. Yet we can pray for that day and in the meantime the faithful should strive to be in harmony with the inspired counsel given by His mouthpiece – the prophet – and thus in unity with the Lord – and hence receive peace to their souls.

The more who are united with the Lord and His prophets the greater will be our chances to preserve our families and to live in freedom.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

Charles Malek, Secretary General of the United States, once said on this campus, "I respect all men and it is from disrespect for none that I say there are no great leaders in the world today. In fact, greatness itself is laughed to scorn. You should not be great today; you should sink yourself into the herd. You should not be distinguished from the crowd; you should simply be one of the many..."

Just think a moment of George Washington, of Franklin, of Madison, of the Adams's, of Thomas Jefferson, and their associates who signed the Declaration of Independence, or participated in the

Constitutional Convention. Where in all the world today can even one or two such men be found, let alone the great aggregation that participated in the birth of America?

Can anyone deny that they were raised up unto this very purpose, that working together, they brought forth on this continent an independent nation at the risk of their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor? It is my conviction that while we've had a few great leaders since then, there has not been before or since, so large a group of talented, able, and dedicated men as those whom we call the Founding Fathers of this nation. For as long as they lived, they acknowledged the hand of the Almighty in the affairs of this republic.

-President Gordon B. Hinckley, [Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 1997](#)

We have also gone a long way on the road to public ownership and management of the vital means of production. In both of these areas the free agency of Americans has been greatly abridged. Some argue that we have voluntarily surrendered this power to government. Be this as it may, the fact remains that the loss of freedom with the consent of the enslaved, or even at their request, is nonetheless slavery.

As to the fruits of socialism, we all have our own opinions. I myself have watched its growth in our own country and observed it in operation in many other lands. But I have yet to see or hear of its freeing the hearts of men of selfishness and greed or of its bringing peace, plenty, or freedom. These things it will never bring, nor will it do away with idleness and promote "industry, thrift and self-respect," for it is founded, in theory and in practice, on force, the principle of the evil one.

-Marion G. Romney, [Conference Report, April 1966, p. 98](#)

Efforts are being made to deprive man of his free agency, to steal from the individual his liberty; and we must never forget that next to life itself, free agency is the greatest gift of God to man.

The two most important documents affecting the destiny of America are the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. Both of these inspired, immortal papers relate primarily to the freedom of the individual. Founded upon that principle of free enterprise fostered by these documents, the United States of America, in less than two centuries, has achieved a greatness that far exceeds that of any other country in the world.

-David O. McKay, [Conference Report, October 1966, p. 5](#)

The devil knows that if the elders of Israel should ever wake up, they could step forth and help preserve freedom and extend the gospel. Therefore the devil has concentrated, and to a large extent successfully, in neutralizing much of the priesthood. He has reduced them to sleeping giants. His arguments are clever. Here are a few samples:

First: "We really haven't received much instruction about freedom," the devil says. This is a lie, for we have been warned time and again. No prophet of the Lord has ever issued more solemn warning than President David O. McKay. Last conference I spoke of a book embodying much of the prophets' warnings

on freedom from Joseph Smith to David O. McKay which I commend to you. It is entitled Prophets, Principles, and National Survival.

Second: “You’re too involved in other church work,” says the devil. But freedom is a weighty matter of the law; the lesser principles of the gospel you should keep but not leave this one undone. We may have to balance and manage our time better. Your other church work will be limited once you lose your freedom as our Saints have found out in Czechoslovakia, Poland, and many other nations.

Third: “You want to be loved by everyone,” says the devil, “and this freedom battle is so controversial you might be accused of engaging in politics.” Of course the government has penetrated so much of our lives that one can hardly speak for freedom without being accused of being political. Some might even call the war in heaven a political struggle—certainly it was controversial. Yet the valiant entered it with Michael. Those who support only the popular principles of the gospel have their reward. And those who want to lead the quiet, retiring life but still expect to do their full duty can’t have it both ways.

Fourth: “Wait until it becomes popular to do,” says the devil, “or, at least until everybody in the Church agrees on what should be done.” But this fight for freedom might never become popular in our day. And if you wait until everybody agrees in this Church, you will be waiting through the second coming of the Lord. Would you have hesitated to follow the inspired counsel of the Prophet Joseph Smith simply because some weak men disagreed with him? God’s living mouthpiece has spoken to us—are we for him or against him? In spite of the Prophet’s opposition to increased federal aid and compulsory unionism, some church members still champion these freedom destroying programs. Where do you stand?

Fifth: “It might hurt your business or your family,” says the devil, “and besides why not let the gentiles save the country? They aren’t as busy as you are.” Well, there were many businessmen who went along with Hitler because it supposedly helped their business. They lost everything. Many of us are here today because our forefathers loved truth enough that they fought at Valley Forge or crossed the plains in spite of the price it cost them or their families. We had better take our small pain now than our greater loss later.

There were souls who wished afterwards that they had stood and fought with Washington and the founding fathers, but they waited too long—they passed up eternal glory. There has never been a greater time than now to stand up against entrenched evil. And while the gentiles established the Constitution, we have a divine mandate to preserve it. But unfortunately today in this freedom struggle, many gentiles are showing greater wisdom in their generation than the children of light.

Sixth: “Don’t worry,” says the devil, “the Lord will protect you, and besides the world is so corrupt and heading toward destruction at such a pace that you can’t stop it, so why try.” Well to begin with, the Lord will not protect us unless we do our part. This devilish tactic of persuading people not to get concerned because the Lord will protect them no matter what they do is exposed by the Book of Mormon. Referring to the devil, it says, “And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion, yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.”

I like that word “carefully.” In other words, don’t shake them, you might awake them. But the Book of Mormon warns us that when we should see these murderous conspiracies in our midst that we should awake to our awful situation. Now why should we awake if the Lord is going to take care of us anyway? Now let us suppose that it is too late to save freedom. It is still accounted unto us for righteousness’

sake to stand up and fight. Some Book of Mormon prophets knew of the final desolate end of their nations, but they still fought on, and they saved some souls including their own by so doing. For, after all, the purpose of life is to prove ourselves, and the final victory will be for freedom.

And now as to the last neutralizer that the devil uses most effectively—it is simply this: “Don’t do anything in the fight for freedom until the Church sets up its own specific program to save the Constitution.” This brings us right back to the scripture I opened with today—to those slothful servants who will not do anything until they are “compelled in all things.” Maybe the Lord will never set up a specific church program for the purpose of saving the Constitution. Perhaps if he set one up at this time it might split the Church asunder, and perhaps he does not want that to happen yet for not all the wheat and tares are fully ripe.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1965, pp. 123-125](#)

John Adams, another of America’s Founding Fathers, insisted: “We have no government armed with power capable of contending with human passions unbridled by morality and religion.” Yet that is precisely the position we find ourselves in today.

Our government is succumbing to pressure to distance itself from God and religion. Consequently, the government is discovering that it is incapable of contending with people who are increasingly “unbridled by morality and religion.” A simple constitutional prohibition of state-sponsored church has evolved into court-ordered bans against representations of the Ten Commandments on government buildings, Christmas manger scenes on public property, and prayer at public meetings.

Instead of seeking the “national morality” based on “religious principle” that Washington spoke of, many are actively seeking a blind standard of legislative amorality, with a total exclusion of the mention of God in the public square.

Such a standard of religious exclusion is absolutely and unequivocally counter to the intention of those who designed our government.

-M. Russell Ballard, ["Religion in a Free Society," Ensign, October 1992](#)

Some of the things said by various persons in recent public discourse cause me to urge that we be more careful in the way we throw around the idea that something is unconstitutional. A constitution should not be used as a weapon to end debate. A public policy or a proposed law that is unwise is not necessarily unconstitutional. Even if it is a stupid proposal, it is not necessarily unconstitutional. A constitution gives the people and their elected leaders the opportunity to make many decisions that are unwise or even reckless. When that happens — when the government or one of its officials engages in some kind of action that we consider to be wrong — we should engage in vigorous public debate about it. But we should not use up a constitution by attempting to strike down every ill-conceived act of government or to discredit every unwise official. A constitution is the ultimate weapon, and we preserve that weapon best by using it sparingly and carefully. If we call some action unconstitutional, we should be prepared to explain what provision or principle of a constitution it violates. In this way, a constitution can be used to stimulate discussion and to seek unity.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Fundamentals of Our Constitution," Address given at Salt Lake City, 9/17/10](#)

Patriotism should be sought for and will be found in right living, not in high sounding phrases or words. True patriotism is part of the solemn obligation that belongs to the nation and to the individual and to the home. Our nation's reputation should be guarded as sacredly as our family's good name. That reputation should be defended by every citizen, and our children should be taught to defend their country's honor under all circumstances.

-President Joseph F. Smith, 1912, [The Juvenile Instructor, 47:388](#)

According to Norman Vincent Peale, “There was a time when the American people roared like lions for liberty; now they bleat like sheep for security.”

“But,” some say, “shouldn’t we have confidence in our government officials – don’t we owe them allegiance?” To which we respond in the words of President Clark, *“God provided that in this land of liberty, our political allegiance shall run not to individuals, that is, to government officials... the only allegiant we owe as citizens or denizens of the United States, runs to our inspired Constitution which God Himself set up.”*

Jefferson warned that we should not talk about confidence in men but that we should inhibit their power through the Constitution. In the meantime, we pray for our leaders as we have always been counseled to do.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

We again warn our people in America of the constantly increasing threat against our inspired Constitution and our free institutions set up under it. The same political tenets and philosophies that have brought war and terror in other parts of the world are at work amongst us in America. The proponents thereof are seeking to undermine our own form of government and to set up instead one of the forms of dictatorships now flourishing in other lands. These revolutionists are using a technique that is as old as the human race, - a fervid but false solicitude for the unfortunate over whom they thus gain mastery, and then enslave them...

Latter-day Saints cannot be true to their faith and lend aid, encouragement, or sympathy to any of these false philosophies. They will prove snares to their feet.

-First Presidency Message, [Conference Report, April 1942, p. 90](#)

Religious freedom is the cornerstone of peace in a world with many competing philosophies. It gives us all space to determine for ourselves what we think and believe – to follow the truth that God speaks to our hearts. It allows diverse beliefs to coexist, protects the vulnerable, and helps us negotiate our conflicts...

A robust freedom is not merely what political philosophers have referred to as the “negative” freedom to be left alone, however important that may be. Rather, it is a much richer “positive” freedom – the freedom to live one’s religion or belief in a legal, political, and social environment that is tolerant, respectful, and accommodating of diverse beliefs.

-D. Todd Christofferson, [“A Celebration of Religious Freedom,” Sao Paulo, Brazil, 4/29/15](#)

We should both participate ourselves and support people of character and integrity to help reestablish moral values that will bless the entire community.

Let me be clear that all voices need to be heard in the public square. Neither religious nor secular voices should be silenced. Furthermore, we should not expect that because some of our views emanate from religious principles, they will automatically be accepted or given preferential status. But it is also clear such views and values are entitled to be reviewed on their merits.

The moral foundation of our doctrine can be a beacon light to the world and can be a unifying force for both morality and faith in Jesus Christ. We need to protect our families and be at the forefront together with all people of goodwill in doing everything we can to preserve light, hope, and morality in our communities.

If we both live and proclaim these principles, we will be following Jesus Christ, who is the true Light of the World. We can be a force for righteousness in preparing for the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

-Quentin L. Cook, [“Let There Be Light!” Ensign, November 2010](#)

It is time, therefore, that every American, and especially every member of the priesthood, become informed about the aims, tactics, and schemes of socialistic-communism. This becomes particularly important when it is realized that communism is turning out to be the earthly image of the plan which Satan presented in the pre-existence. The whole program of socialistic-communism is essentially a war against God and the plan of salvation - the very plan which we fought to uphold during "the war in heaven."

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1961, p. 70](#)

Reflecting on that special patriotic hymn we just heard played and sung, [America the Beautiful](#), provides so much for us to ponder. Given America's present circumstances, certain of that hymn's lyric phrases are actually quite haunting. As we sing, for instance, of a "patriot dream that sees beyond the years," it reminds us of the special perspective which patriotism possesses. True patriotism takes the long view of this nation's needs. For instance, what does this reminding lyric tell us about our constant and collective refusal, regardless of party, to face America's mounting national debt and our destabilizing budget deficit?

...By this persistent lack of national resolve in our time, we are robbing our children and grandchildren, however silently, of their economic freedom and future. We cannot seem to see beyond the political moment, let alone beyond the years. Indeed, the patriot's dream may be replaced by some nightmares.

-Neal A. Maxwell, [Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 7/4/93](#)

The Constitution provides that the great bulk of the legitimate activities of government are to be carried out at the state or local level. This is the only way in which the principle of “self-government” can be made effective.

The smallest or lowest level that can possibly undertake the task is the one that should do so. Only if no smaller unit can possibly do the job should the federal government be considered. This is merely the application to the field of politics of that wise and time-tested principle of never asking a larger group to do that which can be done by a smaller group. The smaller the governmental unit and the closer it is to the people, the easier it is to guide it, to correct it, to keep it solvent and to keep our freedom...

Remember that the people of the states of this republic created the Federal Government. The Federal Government did not create the states.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Proper Role of Government," Address given at BYU, 10/21/68](#)

(The) principle of neighbor-love means to me, when translated into terms of political science and into what I will call a mass economic system, that we shall recognize as an inherent right of other men the same right that we insist upon for ourselves in working and earning a livelihood for ourselves and our loved ones. Government should recognize this right of the individual and guarantee it to him. This is as far as government should go.

Thus the State cannot guarantee a livelihood for every man, for that is state socialism and many of us utterly repudiate socialism, but it does mean that the State must protect me and my neighbor in our equal right and opportunity to work.

Again, this principle [of neighborly love] does not mean that the State shall aim to see that all men shall, by gratuity or other artificial means, be on an equality in the distribution of materials, for this is communism, and this, too, many of us repudiate. To bring about any equality in such a distribution means taking from the efficient, the industrious, the thrifty, the fruits of their labors, and, then, without compensation for their fruits so taken, bestowing them upon the ne're-do-wells, the inefficient, the confirmed idlers. The efficient become, in this system, the slaves of the rest of society. This is the necessary incident of communism, and except where it replaces slavery, open or covert, communism has always meant the reduction of all men to near the lowest level, instead of the raising of all men to near the highest level, as communist leaders hypnotize their dupes into believing.

-J. Reuben Clark, [Church News](#), 12/14/46

Your discipleship may see the time come when religious convictions are heavily discounted. M. J. Sobran also observed, “A religious conviction is now a second-class conviction, expected to step deferentially to the back of the secular bus, and not to get uppity about it.” This new irreligious imperialism seeks to disallow certain of people’s opinions simply because those opinions grow out of religious convictions. Resistance to abortion will soon be seen as primitive. Concern over the institution of the family will be viewed as untrendy and unenlightened.

In its mildest form, irreligion will merely be condescending toward those who hold to traditional Judeo-Christian values. In its more harsh forms, as is always the case with those whose dogmatism is blinding,

the secular church will do what it can to reduce the influence of those who still worry over standards such as those in the Ten Commandments. It is always such an easy step from dogmatism to unfair play – especially so when the dogmatists believe themselves to be dealing with primitive people who do not know what is best for them. It is the secular bureaucrat's burden, you see.

-Neal A. Maxwell, [“Meeting the Challenges of Today,” Address given at BYU, 10/10/78](#)

The fostering of full economic freedom lies at the base of our liberties. Only in perpetuating economic freedom can our social, political and religious liberties be preserved.

-President David O. McKay, [Church News, 3/12/52](#)

In reply to the argument that just a little bit of socialism is good so long as it doesn't go too far, may I say that history proves that the growth of the welfare state is difficult to check before it comes to its full flower of dictatorship. But let us hope that this time around, the trend can be reversed, and by people such as you. If not then we will see the inevitability of complete socialism, probably within our lifetime.

How is it possible to cut out the various welfare state features of our government which have already fastened themselves like cancer cells onto the body politic? Can drastic surgery be performed without endangering the patient? Drastic measures ARE called for. No compromise actions will suffice. Like all surgery, it will not be without discomfort and perhaps even some scar tissue for a long time to come. But it must be done if the patient is to be saved, and it can be done without undue risk.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Proper Role of Government," Address given at BYU, 10/21/68](#)

Brigham Young's teachings were "Do not run into debt; pay as you go," and I am a firm believer that this is good advice to the individual and to the inhabitants of a city, a county, or a state - or, I might add - a nation. I am a firm believer that men should be self-reliant.

-President Heber J. Grant, 1936, [The Improvement Era, 39:524](#)

No system of education can be perfect which does not teach the principles of righteousness and faith in God. Learning has not saved the world, neither can it save it. No man by wisdom ever found out God, and men may study all their lives and acquire all the knowledge and worldly wisdom that is within the reach of the human mind, and yet be utterly destitute of the true knowledge of God.

It is of the utmost importance that our children should, in the first place, be taught faith in God. This cannot be left out of our system of education. Every child in our midst should be taught how to obtain a knowledge of God. This should be made the cornerstone and the foundation of all education.

-George Q. Cannon, 1890, [The Juvenile Instructor, 25:243](#)

We must learn the principles of the Constitution in the tradition of the Founding Fathers. Have we read The Federalist Papers? Are we reading the Constitution and pondering it? Are we aware of its principles? Are we abiding by these principles and teaching them to others? Could we defend the Constitution? Can we recognize when a law is constitutionally unsound? Do we know what the prophets have said about the Constitution and the threats to it? As Jefferson said, "If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, ...it expects what never was and never will be."

-President Ezra Taft Benson, [October 1987 General Conference](#)

I believe in individualism as opposed to paternalism. In saying this, I recognize the fact that a man's duties to himself and to his fellow men are indissolubly connected. Jesus taught that if a man is true to his own highest interests, he cannot fail to discharge his obligations to his neighbors. Conversely, He taught that if a man is faithful to the interests of his fellow men, he cannot be faithless to his own. And as a man thinks, so he acts.

Within my experience, there has never been a time when the doctrine of individual initiative and individual effort should be more generally taught and more earnestly put into effect than at the present day.

Too many men are claiming that the world owes them a living, and they are sitting effortlessly by expecting the world to throw its luxuries into their passive laps. Too late they will learn that the earth rewards richly only the strenuous strugglers.

Work brings happiness, and that happiness is doubled to him who initiates the work.

-President David O. McKay, 1961, [The Instructor, 96:289](#)

I believe that the conditions which we see prevalent in the country today are a natural and logical outgrowth of much that has prevailed in our systems of education, in our systems of ethics, and in the very manner in which the affairs of this country have, from time to time, been carried on. Throughout the past half century at least, our educational processes have been largely, if not entirely, devoid of anything pertaining to the divine, of anything pertaining to the spiritual, or anything pertaining to the truly religious. There has been a studied effort on the part of those who have controlled the educational systems of the day to avoid even the appearance of religion in any way, shape or form.

I take it that there has come, as a natural consequence from that kind of education, a total disregard for the religious in man's life. There has come an absolute disregard and disrespect for things divine. God has been left out of consideration; the methods of men alone have prevailed, and everywhere and under all conditions the things that have pertained to this world, the things that have pertained to our temporal life have been made paramount and have predominated over the things that have pertained to our souls and the welfare of our souls.

-Stephen L. Richards, [Conference Report, October 1919, p. 102](#)

It is the devil's desire that the Lord's priesthood stay asleep while the strings of tyranny gradually and quietly entangle us until, like Gulliver, we awake too late and find that while we could have broken each

string separately as it was put upon us, our sleepiness permitted enough strings to bind us to make the rope that enslaves us.

For years we have heard of the role the elders could play in saving the Constitution from total destruction. But how can the elders be expected to save it if they have not studied it and are not sure if it is being destroyed or what is destroying it?

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

Oh, let us oppose any subversive influence that would deprive us of our individual freedom or make this government a dictator instead of a servant to the people.

-President David O. McKay, [Conference Report, October 1951, p. 161](#)

Do you think that mere chance placed the freedom to worship according to individual conscience among the first freedoms specified in the Bill of Rights—freedoms that are destined to flourish together or perish separately? The Founding Fathers understood this country's spiritual heritage. They frequently declared that God's hand was upon this nation, and that He was working through them to create what Chesterton once called "a nation with the soul of a church."

While they were influenced by history and their accumulated knowledge, the single most influential reference source for their work on the Constitution was the Holy Bible.

-M. Russell Ballard, ["Religion in a Free Society," Ensign, October 1992](#)

There is need for public praise of our constitutions and their principles. A rising generation of influential opinion makers seems to place a lesser value on the United States Constitution... The United States Constitution is the oldest written national constitution still in use. It has served Americans well, enhancing freedom and prosperity during the changing conditions of more than 200 years.

Frequently copied, it has become the United States' most important export. After two centuries, every nation in the world except six have adopted written constitutions, and the United States Constitution was a model for all of them. Consequently, if we abandon or weaken its fundamental principles, we betray our own national ideals and we also weaken our global neighbors.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Fundamentals of Our Constitution," Address given at Salt Lake City, UT, 9/17/10](#)

By deriving its just powers from the governed, government becomes primarily a mechanism for defense against bodily harm, theft, and involuntary servitude. It cannot claim the power to redistribute money or property nor to force reluctant citizens to perform acts of charity against their will. Government is created by the people. No individual possesses the power to take another's wealth or to force others to do good, so no government has the right to do such things either. The creature cannot exceed the creator.

-President Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Constitution - A Heavenly Banner," Address given at BYU, 9/16/86](#)

It was Joseph Smith who has been quoted as having said that the time would come when the Constitution would hang as by a thread, and at that time when it was thus in jeopardy, the elders of this Church would step forth and save it from destruction.

Why the elders of this Church? Would it be sacrilegious to paraphrase the words of the Apostle Peter, and say that the Constitution of the United States could be saved by the elders of this Church because this Church and this Church alone has the words of eternal life? We alone know by revelation as to how the Constitution came into being, and we, alone, know by revelation the destiny of this nation. The preservation of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" can be guaranteed upon no other basis than upon a sincere faith and testimony of the divinity of these teachings.

-Harold B. Lee, [Conference Report, October 1952, p. 18](#)

The entire concept and philosophy of Communism is diametrically opposed to everything for which the Church stands - *belief in Deity, belief in the dignity and eternal nature of man, and the application of the gospel to efforts for peace in the world*. Communism is militantly atheistic and is committed to the destruction of faith wherever it may be found.

The Russian Commissar of Education wrote: "We must hate Christians and Christianity. Even the best of them must be considered our worst enemies. Christian love is an obstacle to the development of the revolution. Down with love for one's neighbor. What we want is hate. Only then shall we conquer the universe."

Communism debases the individual and makes him the enslaved tool of the state, to which he must look for sustenance and religion. Communism destroys man's God-given free agency.

No member of this Church can be true to his faith, nor can any American be loyal to his trust, while lending aid, encouragement, or sympathy to any of these false philosophies; for if he does, they will prove snares to his feet.

-David O. McKay, [Conference Report, April 1966, pp. 109-110](#)

Many of the prophecies referring to America's preservation are conditional. That is, if we do our duty we can be preserved, and if not then we shall be destroyed. This means that a good deal of the responsibility lies with the priesthood of this Church as to what happens to America and as to how much tragedy can be avoided if we do act now.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1965, p. 125](#)

[The Lord] has told us that in preparation for the restoration of the gospel, he himself established the Constitution of the United States, and he has plainly told us why he established it. I hope I can get this point over to you. He said he established the Constitution to preserve to men their free agency, because the whole gospel of Jesus Christ presupposes man's untrammelled exercise of free agency.

Man is in [sic] the earth to be tested. The issue as to whether he succeeds or fails will be determined by how he uses his agency. His whole future, through all eternity, is at stake. Abridge man's agency, and the whole purpose of his mortality is thwarted.

Without it, the Lord says, there is no existence. (See D&C 93:30.) The Lord so valued our agency that he designed and dictated "the laws and constitution" required to guarantee it.

-Marion G. Romney, [Conference Report, April 1966, p. 99](#)

We have on our coinage and our currency a national motto. It simply says, In God We Trust. I know of no other nation with such a motto. Other nations use the phrase, By the Grace of God, but none other categorically states, In God We Trust. This is the foundation upon which this nation was established: an unequivocal trust in the power of the Almighty to guide and defend us.

-President Gordon B. Hinckley, [Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 1997](#)

We know that our national government cannot continue indefinitely to spend more than it receives. If the citizen-voters of this nation continue to demand the current level of government expenditures that produces our deficits, then our citizen-taxpayers must accept the tax increases necessary to fund them. If we won't raise taxes, we should accept cuts in various expenditures. We cannot continue much longer to fund our current levels of government expenditures by increased borrowings.

This problem cannot be solved by the popular but superficial action of merely opposing all tax increases. It cannot be solved by the phony solution of proposing spending cuts on every government program except our various personal favorites. This familiar approach shatters working coalitions and imposes gridlock on progress toward reducing deficits. Citizen-taxpayers have endured the resulting government paralysis on deficit reduction for years, until we are about to drift over the fiscal falls from the effects of the national debt.

Citizen-voters should demand that our elected President and lawmakers act decisively and courageously to reduce the steeply increasing debt we are leaving to our children and grandchildren and the progressively paralyzing proportion of current income our government must pay as interest on that debt.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Some Responsibilities of Citizenship," Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 7/3/94](#)

Let the people lay the foundation for carrying out the Republican Government which was instituted by our fathers, instead of maintaining a government of anarchy, confusion, and strife...

If the government knew what the wants of the people were, they would take away the salaries of political demagogues, and stop their running and their stump preaching, from one end of the land to the other, to make proselytes to their cause. This would have a tendency to put an end to party names, to party jealousies, and to party conflicts forever. And the people should concentrate their feelings, their influence, and their faith, to select the best man they can find to be their president, if he has nothing more to eat than potatoes and salt - a man who will not aspire to become greater than the people who

appoint him, but be contented to live as they live, be clothed as they are clothed, and in every good thing be one with them.

-President Brigham Young, 1854, [Journal of Discourses, 7:12-13](#)

When the day comes in which the Kingdom of God will bear rule, the flag of the United States will proudly flutter unsullied on the flagstaff of liberty and equal rights, without a spot to sully its fair surface; the glorious flag our fathers have bequeathed to us will then be unfurled to the breeze by those who have power to hoist it aloft and defend its sanctity.

-President Brigham Young, 1855, [Journal of Discourses, 2:317](#)

When we cease to be a God-fearing people, we fall easy prey to the false philosophy of evil-designing men and nations. This was true in the days of Israel, as a study of the Holy Bible reveals. It is true today as history now unfolds itself. For this reason we are discarding, even in this great nation of freedom-loving people, a God-given constitution of freedom, inspired for free men that they might worship according to the dictates of their own conscience, for the doctrines of collectivism produced to enslave mankind and rob them of all freedom and make them puppets of dictators rather than children of our Heavenly Father, living in freedom, at liberty to exercise their God-given free agency.

No doubt some of you have been attracted by the promises of some such false philosophies, hoping to get something for nothing. Never will this be the case. Beware lest you part with your birthright for a mess of pottage. Such a course presents a one-way street and marks out a path to pursue from which there is no return.

-Henry D. Moyle, [Church News](#), 6/19/49

An informed patriotic gentile was dumbfounded when he heard of Joseph Smith's reported prophecy regarding the mission our elders could perform in saving the Constitution. He lived in a Mormon community with nice people who were busily engaged in other activities but who had little concern in preserving their freedom. He wondered if maybe a letter should not be sent to President McKay, urging him to release some of the elders from their present Church activities so there would be a few who could help step forward to save the Constitution.

Now it is not so much a case of a man giving up all his other duties to fight for freedom, as it is a case of a man getting his life in balance so he can discharge all of his God-given responsibilities. And of all these responsibilities President McKay has said that we have "no greater immediate responsibility" than "to protect the freedom vouchsafed by the Constitution of the United States."

There is no excuse that can compensate for the loss of liberty.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

So it is that whenever we talk about patriotism, the risks are that we will define it too narrowly. It's not that any particular dimension of patriotism is unworthy; rather no one portion of patriotism comprises the whole of patriotism. For instance, we would all quickly agree that patriotism is more than paying taxes. It is likewise more than voting, yet it includes these, along with all the other unglamorous chores of citizenship. Patriotism requires public perspiration, as well as an educated public who truly can see "beyond the years." Besides, the perspective of patriotism is vital because democracy and memory are not automatic partners...

Patriotism, which sees beyond the years, leaves legacies to rising generations instead of debt. It leaves a clean turf, not the debris of a selfish society. Tolkien wisely counseled, saying: "It is not our part to master all the tides of the world, but to do what is in us for the succor of those years wherein we are set, uprooting the evil in the fields that we know, so that those who live after may have clean earth to till. What weather they shall have is not ours to rule."

How are we doing, ladies and gentlemen, with those years wherein we are set?

-Neal A. Maxwell, [Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 7/4/93](#)

Said the Prophet Joseph Smith: "I am bold to declare before Heaven that I am just as ready to die in defending the rights of a Presbyterian, a Baptist, or a good man of any other denomination [as for a Mormon]; for the same principle which would trample upon the rights of the Latter-day Saints would trample upon the rights of the Roman Catholics, or of any other denomination who may be unpopular and too weak to defend themselves. It is a love of liberty which inspires my soul – civil and religious liberty to the whole of the human race."

Brothers and sisters, we are responsible to safeguard these sacred freedoms and rights for ourselves and our posterity. What can you and I do?

First, we can become informed. Be aware of issues in your community that could have an impact on religious liberty.

Second, in your individual capacity, join with others who share our commitment to religious freedom. Work side by side to protect religious freedom.

Third, live your life to be a good example of what you believe – in word and in deed. How we live our religion is far more important than what we may say about our religion.

-Robert D. Hales, ["Preserving Agency, Protecting Religious Freedom," Ensign, May 2015, p. 113](#)

By the grace of God we occupy this land, the blessings of which are unequalled in any other land. It is difficult for us of this generation to fully appreciate these blessings because they were not won by the shedding of our own blood, sweat, and tears, but by that of others.

There are some things, however, that we must no longer fail to appreciate. If we do so, we shall do it at our peril. Chief among these things is man's free agency, which was provided for in the Constitution as it was originally adopted and interpreted.

America's destiny requires that the constitutional safeguards of this freedom be appreciated and maintained. It is imperative that they be maintained and observed here in America in order that they may go out from here undiluted to the protection of all flesh. Whether this generation of Americans will live up to its opportunity to obey and preserve them, particularly God's law of liberty – including the gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the God of this land – remains to be seen. If it does not, the wicked among us will be destroyed, as were the wicked preceding the appearance of the risen Lord to the Nephites. God will spare the righteous and raise up another generation in this land, for out of Zion the law of God will go forth.

-Marion G. Romney, ["America's Fate and Ultimate Destiny," Address given at BYU, 5/2/76](#)

What it seems to come down to is this: The conservative has faith in the human person to make his own decisions. The liberal has faith in the ability of Washington to make more and more decisions for us.

The liberal would impose on the people their version of progress whether the people want it or not. Conservatives believe that the best way to achieve progress in our country is through individual effort and not government force which in the end will destroy all progress and all freedom. In the long run we do things better for ourselves than the government can do them for us. Government serves best when it protects the freedom of the individual. But the moment government steps in and dictates the economic or agricultural life of the nation, the individual's rights begin to diminish and are in danger ultimately of vanishing.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [The Red Carpet](#), p. 211

Today there are in this country enemies in the form of "isms." I call them Anti-Americanisms. Only a few of the leaders fight openly - most of the army carry on as termites, secretly sowing discord and undermining stable government...

Their method of working their way to the seizure of power (is described) as follows: *"Talk about peace, talk about social equality, especially among those most oppressed. Talk about organization of labor, and penetrate into every labor union. Talk on soap boxes. Publish pamphlets and papers. Orate and harangue. Play on envy. Arouse jealousy. Separate class from class. Try to break down the democratic processes from within. Accustom the people to picketing, strikes, mass meetings. Constantly attack the leaders in every way possible, so that the people will lose confidence. Then in time of national peril, during a war, on the occasion of a great disaster, or on a general strike, walk into the capital and seize the power. A well-organized minority can work wonders."*

-David O. McKay, [Conference Report, October 1939, pp. 103-4](#)

Citizens should also be practitioners of civic virtue in their conduct toward government. They should be ever willing to fulfill the duties of citizenship. This includes compulsory duties like military service and the numerous voluntary actions they must take if they are to preserve the principle of limited government through citizen self-reliance. For example, since U.S. citizens value the right of trial by jury, they must be willing to serve on juries, even those involving unsavory subject matter. Citizens who favor morality cannot leave the enforcement of moral laws to jurors who oppose them.

The single word that best describes a fulfillment of the duties of civic virtue is patriotism. Citizens should be patriotic. My favorite prescription for patriotism is that of Adlai Stevenson: "What do we mean by patriotism in the context of our times? ... A patriotism that puts country ahead of self; a patriotism which is not short, frenzied outbursts of emotion, but the tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime."
-Dallin H. Oaks, ["The Divinely Inspired Constitution," Ensign, February 1992](#)

A category of government activity which not only requires the closest scrutiny, but which also poses a grave danger to our continued freedom, is the activity NOT within the proper sphere of government. No one has the authority to grant such powers as welfare programs, schemes for re-distributing the wealth, and activities which coerce people into acting in accordance with a prescribed code of social planning. There is one simple test. Do I as an individual have a right to use force upon my neighbor to accomplish this goal? If I do, then I may delegate that power to my government to exercise on my behalf. If I do not have that right, I cannot delegate it.

There are times when this principle of the proper role of government is most annoying and inconvenient. If I could only force the ignorant to provide for themselves, or the selfish to be generous with their wealth! But if we permit government to manufacture its own authority, and to create self-proclaimed powers not delegated to it by the people, then the creature exceeds the creator and becomes master. Who is to say "this far, and no farther?" What clear principle will stay the hand of government from reaching farther and yet farther into our daily lives? Grover Cleveland said that "...though the people support the Government the Government should not support the people."
-Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Proper Role of Government," Address given at BYU, 10/21/68](#)

The Founding Fathers very likely were aware of the experiences of Roger Williams and others when they wrote in the First Amendment that the government cannot impede the free exercise of religion. They wrote that the church and the state were to be separate, independent entities, not to eliminate morality and God's law but to make sure that the power of government could never be used to silence religious expression or to persecute religious practice. Once again quoting George Washington: "If I could have entertained the slightest apprehension that the Constitution, framed in the convention where I had the honor to preside, might possibly endanger the religious rights of any ecclesiastical society, certainly I would never have placed my signature to it."

What would Washington have thought if he could have foreseen our day? Would he have signed the document?

I believe he would have been troubled to see a time when citizens are forbidden to pray in public meetings; when people claim that "you can't legislate morality," as if any law ever passed did not have at its heart some notion of right and wrong; when churches are called intruders when they speak out against public policy that is contrary to the commandments of God; when many people reject the correcting influence of churches if it infringes on daily living; when religion is accepted as a social organization but not as an integral part of national culture; when people bristle if representatives of churches speak in any forum except from the pulpit.

-M. Russell Ballard, ["Religion in a Free Society," Ensign, October 1992](#)

As a people who have known only liberty, we are inclined to feel, *it cannot happen here*. We have become lulled away into a false security...

I say to you it can happen here. It is happening here. We have retreated from the Monroe Doctrine. Our liberty is in danger. But we go blithely and gullibly on our way. Some of us fall for the Kremlin line as planned by the mass murderer Khrushchev and call patriots "extremists" and accuse courageous liberty-loving citizens of "dividing our people..."

We must be vigilant. Let us unite. Let us join in our fight against the forces of anti-Christ.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1962, p. 17](#)

What can priesthood holders do? There are many things we can do to meet the challenge of the adversary in our day.

First, we should become informed about communism, about socialism, and about Americanism. What better way can one become informed than by first studying the inspired words of the prophets and using that as a foundation against which to test all other material. This is in keeping with the Prophet Joseph Smith's motto, "When the Lord commands, do it..."

We should know enough about American free enterprise to be able to defend it. We should know what makes it possible for six percent of humanity - living under our free economy - to produce about one-half of the earth's developed wealth each year.

We should know why paternalism, collectivism, or unnecessary federal supervision will hold our standard of living down and reduce productivity just as it has in every country where it has been tried. We should also know why the communist leaders consider socialism the highroad to communism.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1961, p. 74](#)

The duty of [the school] is to instill patriotism and loyalty to the government and society. I think the real purpose of the school is to develop character! ...Educators say it is to teach the three "R's", science, social science, etc. That is why schools are maintained, but the main purpose (and I wish it were instilled in the heart of every teacher throughout this great country), is to develop character, loyalty to God, to the government, loyalty to the home, and loyalty to the individual himself.

"Character is higher than intellect; a great soul will be fit to live, as well as to think."

-President David O. McKay, [Church News](#), 8/24/63

Let us not be deceived in the sifting days ahead. Let us rally together on principle behind the prophet as guided by the promptings of the Spirit.

We should continue to speak out for freedom and against socialism and communism as President McKay has consistently admonished us. We should continue to come to the aid of patriots, programs and organizations which are trying to save our Constitution through every legal and moral means possible.

God has not left us in darkness regarding these matters. We have the scriptures ancient and modern. We have a living prophet, and we may obtain the Spirit.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1963, p. 19](#)

I will develop within me the courage to stand up and defend that which I believe to be right. I will declare my personal witness that the heavens are not closed. The Lord continues to guide and direct all of his children on earth if they will but heed his voice. I will teach my firm conviction that the foundation of any righteous government is the law that has been received from the Lord to guide and direct man's efforts. Righteous government receives direction from the Lord. The scripture President Tanner quoted bears this out, in our country, in the establishment of this government. *"And for this purpose have I established the Constitution of this land, by the hands of wise men whom I raised up unto this very purpose, and redeemed the land by the shedding of blood"* (D&C 101:80).

I have resolved to do all that is within my power to keep alive the same faith which existed in the hearts and souls of our early founding fathers. It was George Washington who declared, "The people know it is impossible to rightly govern without God and the Bible." Again from Andrew Jackson the declaration: "The Bible is the rock on which this Republic rests."

I reaffirm before you here today of my faith that the Lord God continues to govern the affairs of his children. His law must be the foundation on which all law is based. We must be willing to support, defend, and live in harmony with his divine law.

-L. Tom Perry, [October 1975 General Conference](#)

Up to now some members of the Church have stood aloof, feeling that the fight against socialistic-communism is "controversial" and unrelated to the mission of the Church or the work of the Lord. But the President of the Church in our day has made it clear that the fight against atheistic communism is a major challenge to the Church and every member in it...

The fight against godless communism is a very real part of every man's duty who holds the priesthood. It is the fight against slavery, immorality, atheism, terrorism, cruelty, barbarism, deceit, and the destruction of human life through a kind of tyranny unsurpassed by anything in human history. Here is a struggle against the evil, satanical priestcraft of Lucifer. Truly it can be called "a continuation of the war in heaven."

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1961, pp. 70-1](#)

Communism, and all other "–isms", in the words of the First Presidency of the Church, are merely the clumsy counterfeits which Satan always devises of the gospel plan. This being true, liberty loving people can no more expect to secure cooperation from communism in the establishment of peace than Christ

could secure such cooperation from Satan. Communism, being what it is, will never voluntarily yield in its evil purpose. Every time it negotiates, it advances its own cause or it does not deal. The inadequacy of our statesmen to deal with it is pointed up by the fact that since World War II, fifteen countries containing six million square miles of territory and 653 million people - a third of the world's population - have been drawn behind the iron curtain. And to our everlasting shame, much of this has been done with our acquiescence. Whether this is a debit to the patriotism or a credit to the stupidity of the responsible persons, I do not profess to know. But this much we all know, it never could have been acquiesced in by men understanding communism and understanding the price of peace as defined in these remarks.

-Marion G. Romney, ["The Price of Peace," BYU, 3/1/59](#)

The founders of this great republic had faith in the economic and political welfare of this country because they had faith in God. Today it is not uncommon to note an apologetic attitude on the part of men when they refer to the need of God's governing in the affairs of men. Indeed, as has already been pointed out, success of Communism depends largely upon the substitution of belief in God by belief in the supremacy of the state.

But I say unto you, preach in season and out of season belief in God the Eternal Father, in his Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost. Proclaim that fundamental in the gospel plan is the sacredness of the individual; that God's work and glory is "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39).

Under this concept, it is a great imposition, if indeed not a crime, for any government, any labor union, or any other organization to deny a man the right to speak, to worship, and to work.

-David O. McKay, [Conference Report, October 1966, p. 7](#)

Now Satan is anxious to neutralize the inspired counsel of the Prophet and hence keep the priesthood off-balance, ineffective and inert in the fight for freedom. He does this through diverse means including the use of perverse reasoning.

For example, he will argue, "There is no need to get involved in the fight for freedom - all you need to do is live the gospel." Of course this is a contradiction, because we cannot fully live the gospel and not be involved in the fight for freedom.

We would not say to someone, "There is no need to be baptized - all you need to do is live the gospel." That would be ridiculous because baptism is a part of the gospel.

How would you have reacted if during the War in Heaven someone had said to you, "Look, just do what's right, there is no need to get involved in the fight for free agency." Now it is obvious what the devil is trying to do, but it is sad to see many of us fall for his destructive line. The cause of freedom is the most basic part of our religion. Our position on freedom helped get us to this earth, and it can make the difference as to whether we get back home or not.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

In April 1898, after he became President of the Church, President Woodruff declared that "those men who laid the foundation of this American government and signed the Declaration of Independence were the best spirits the God of heaven could find on the face of the earth. They were choice spirits ... [and] were inspired of the Lord."

We honor those men today. We are the grateful beneficiaries of their noble work.

But we honor more than those who brought forth the Constitution. We honor the Lord who revealed it. God himself has borne witness to the fact that he is pleased with the final product of the work of these great patriots.

-President Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Constitution - A Heavenly Banner," Address given at BYU, 9/16/86](#)

I agree that a return to many fundamental principles and practices is essential. I am sure that it is an error to discard time-tested doctrines of procedure merely because they are old. I believe that the soundest growth and evolution come from building on solid and tested foundations. He is reckless who disregards the lessons of experience. The evidence is abundant to show that we have strayed far from many fundamental conceptions of right and good.

-Stephen L. Richards, [Conference Report, April 1944, p. 71](#)

When all of the trappings of propaganda and pretense have been pulled aside, the exposed hard-core structure of modern communism is amazingly similar to the ancient Book of Mormon record of secret societies such as the Gadiantons. In the ancient American civilization there was no word which struck greater terror to the hearts of the people than the name of the Gadiantons. It was a secret political party which operated as a murder cult. Its object was to infiltrate legitimate government, plant its officers in high places, and then seize power and live off the spoils appropriated from the people. (It would start out as a small group of "dissenters" and by using secret oaths with the threat of death for defectors it would gradually gain a choke hold on the political and economic life of whole civilizations.)

The object of the Gadiantons, like modern communists, was to destroy the existing government and set up a ruthless criminal dictatorship over the whole land.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1961, p. 71](#)

President Clark knew how righteous unity could stop the Communists when he said: "Now, what has business and industry done about all this revolutionary activity?... Business and industry neither planned nor did anything effective. There was no concerted effort...."

"A common cause with a united front would have worked salvation for us. But business officials were afraid of their stock-holders and their outcry against loss of dividends; the lawyers were afraid of getting whipped in the courts, businessmen felt strong vigorous action might further disturb business; bankers (I am a bank director) shivered at their own shadows.

"So one constitutional right after another yielded without any real contest, our backs getting nearer to the wall with each retreat. It is now proposed that we retreat still further. Is not this suicide? Is there any one so naive as to think that things will right themselves without a fight? There has been no more fight in us than there is in a bunch of sheep, and we have been much like sheep. Freedom was never brought to a people on a silver platter, nor maintained with whisk brooms and lavender sprays."

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

Now the question arises - what can we do to preserve our Constitution, and how can we avoid being misled into doing those things that would actually help to destroy it? There (are) three keys one could use to avoid deception: first, the scriptures; second, the words of prophets, especially the President of the Church (particularly the living one); and third, the Holy Ghost.

The scriptures tell us about the war in heaven over free agency - similar to the war we are going through now, where the devil's program was guaranteed security as opposed to the Lord's program of letting each choose for himself even if he makes the wrong choice. Once you understand these scriptures you will understand why the Presidents of the Church have opposed Communism, Socialism, and the Welfare State and you will see why you must oppose them, too, if you are in harmony with the word of the Lord.

The scriptures also tell about our inspired Constitution. If you accept these scriptures you will automatically reject the counsel of men like Senator Fulbright and others who depreciate our Constitution. If you use the scriptures as a guide you know what the Book of Mormon has to say regarding murderous conspiracies in the last day and how we are to awake to the awful situation today. I find certain elements in the Church do not like to see the Book of Mormon and D&C so much - it has too much to say about freedom.

The second criteria is the prophets, especially the living President of the Church. Do you realize what President McKay has said about some recent decisions of our Supreme Court? Do you realize that he has called Communism the greatest threat to the Church today and has said that this country has traveled far into the soul-destroying land of Socialism? He has opposed programs of federal aid to education; he has supported right-to-work laws. Are you in harmony with the prophet's declarations? If you accept the scriptures and the prophets, then you will automatically separate yourself from the philosophy of some Mormons and you will have to part with a number of our national leaders and their programs.

The last criteria is the Holy Ghost - the test of the spirit. You cannot use that test unless you have the spirit of the Lord with you and that only comes through righteous living - which means being in harmony with Church doctrine in addition to simply being active in Church work and attending meetings.

These are the three main keys - apply them and you will avoid pitfalls and traps which even members of the Church and some teachers may set for you. Using the scriptures and the prophets and the spirit as a guide, we can eliminate a lot of the deceptions and false philosophies and cure-alls of men and discern between the wheat and the chaff.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["A Race Against Time," Address given at BYU, 12/10/64](#)

There has been a tendency among some Latter-day Saints, even when the Constitution is mentioned, to say, "There he goes talking politics." I am not talking politics. I am quoting the words of the Lord. Certainly, it is not meet that we should bring politics into the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but just as certainly, it is meet that every member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints take the doctrine of Christ into his politics, and that he evaluate every candidate and every platform under any and every political banner in the terms of the gospel of Jesus Christ. If there be anyone who would destroy or weaken the Constitution of the United States, oppose him to the limit of your constitutional rights! Obversely, we should support candidates and foster platforms of whatever parties who will protect the sacred Constitution of the United States – that just document of government which was divinely inspired.

-Joseph F. Smith, [Conference Report, April 1946, p. 65](#)

Indeed, some people now claim that the Founding Fathers' worst fear in connection with religion has been realized; that we have, in fact, a state-sponsored religion in America today. This new religion, adopted by many, does not have an identifiable name, but it operates just like a church. It exists in the form of doctrines and beliefs, where morality is whatever a person wants it to be, and where freedom is derived from the ideas of man and not the laws of God. Many people adhere to this concept of morality with religious zeal and fervor, and courts and legislatures tend to support it.

While you may think I am stretching the point a bit to say that amorality could be a new state-sponsored religion, I believe you would agree that we do not have to look far to find horrifying evidence of rampant immorality that is permitted if not encouraged by our laws. From the plague of pornography to the devastation caused by addiction to drugs, illicit sex, and gambling, wickedness rears its ugly head everywhere, often gaining its foothold in society by invoking the powers of constitutional privilege.

We see a sad reality of contemporary life when many of the same people who defend the right of a pornographer to distribute exploitive films and photos would deny freedom of expression to people of faith because of an alleged fear of what might happen from religious influence on government or public meetings. While much of society has allowed gambling to wash over its communities, leaving broken families and individuals in its soul-destroying wake, it reserves its harshest ridicule for those who advocate obedience to God's commandments and uniform, inspired standards of right and wrong.

-M. Russell Ballard, ["Religion in a Free Society," Ensign, October 1992](#)

The Prophet Joseph Smith declared it will be the elders of Israel who will step forward to help save the Constitution, not the Church. And have we elders been warned? Yes, we have. And have we elders been given the guidelines? Yes indeed, we have. And besides, if the Church should ever inaugurate a program, who do you think would be in the forefront to get it moving? It would not be those who were sitting on the sidelines prior to that time or those who were appeasing the enemy. It would be those choice spirits who, not waiting to be "commanded in all things," used their own free will, the counsel of the prophets and the Spirit of the Lord as guidelines and who entered the battle "in a good cause" and brought to pass much righteousness in freedom's cause.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1965, p. 125](#)

Education for citizenship demands more emphasis upon moral and spiritual values. Our government was founded on faith in a Supreme Being as evidenced by the Mayflower Compact, the Declaration of Independence, by George Washington and Benjamin Franklin in the Constitutional Convention, and by a hundred other incidents prior to, during, and following the birth of this Republic. Said the Father of our Country: "We have raised a standard to which the good and wise can repair; the event is in the hands of God."

...God and individual freedom are fundamental principles in our glorious Republic, and our obligation is to keep in our schools a reverence for Deity and respect for the dignity of the individual man.

-President David O. McKay, [Church News](#), 3/13/54

As I speak to you here tonight, I would like for you to have in mind that there was only one reason why the United States came into being—only one reason. It is a different reason from anything that we know in any other nation. There is a United States only because God planned to restore the gospel in the last days and he had to have a free country in which to do it, with freedom of worship, freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and freedom of assembly.

He declared that he would make this the greatest nation in the world, and this he has done. Ours is, indeed, the greatest nation on earth, and it was made so by the Almighty himself. It was made so to fulfill the divine destiny given to us by the Lord. That is why the Book of Mormon prophets declared that this land is choice above all other lands in the earth.

-Mark E. Petersen, ["America - World Leader," Address given at BYU, 7/4/76](#)

In the war in heaven the devil advocated absolute eternal security at the sacrifice of our freedom. Although there is nothing more desirable to a Latter-day Saint than eternal security in God's presence, and although God knew, as did we, that some of us would not achieve this security if we were allowed our freedom - yet the very God of heaven, who has more mercy than us all, still decreed no guaranteed security except by a man's own freedom of choice and individual initiative.

Today the devil as a wolf in a supposedly new suit of sheep's clothing is enticing some men, both in and out of the Church, to parrot his line by advocating planned government guaranteed security programs at the expense of our liberties. Latter-day Saints should be reminded how and why they voted as they did in heaven. If some have decided to change their vote they should repent - throw their support on the side of freedom - and cease promoting this subversion.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1961, p. 71](#)

Let us glance at the political field. Though the need for statesmen was perhaps never greater in the history of the country, the supply, perhaps, was never proportionately less. Certainly the supply of politicians, even demagogues, was never greater. I use the term "politician" in the sense of a holder or seeker of political office who regards getting and holding the office as the all-important thing and who schemes, bargains, and promises in order that he may get support and votes. His principles are often

tenuous and easily changeable to suit the needs of the hour. The demagogue is an unprincipled politician.

The statesman is a man who would "rather be right than be president." He is an able man of principles and of character who avoids compromising with his principles and disdains buying support by making promises to people who seek wholly selfish ends, for this is akin to the crime of bribery.

But it is probably true that the people themselves are responsible for the paucity of statesmen and the abundance of politicians and demagogues.

-Joseph F. Merrill, [Conference Report, October 1944, pp. 30-1](#)

"And Moroni was a strong and a mighty man; he was a man of perfect understanding; yea, a man that did not delight in bloodshed; a man whose soul did joy in the liberty and the freedom of his country, and his brethren from bondage and slavery;

"Yea, and he was a man who was firm in the faith of Christ, and he had sworn with an oath to defend his people, his rights, and his country, and his religion even to the loss of his blood."

And then Moroni is paid this high tribute: *"Yea, verily, verily I say unto you, if all men had been and were, and ever would be like unto Moroni, behold the very powers of hell would have been shaken forever; yea the devil would never have power over the hearts of the children of men."*

Now part of the reason why we don't have sufficient Priesthood bearers to save the Constitution, let alone to shake the powers of hell, is, I fear, because unlike Moroni, our souls do not joy in keeping our country free and we are not firm in the faith of Christ, nor have we sworn with an oath to defend our rights.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

As we sing the words, "confirm thy soul in self-control," what of our society's increasing lack of impulse control? So many people act out their impulses in so many inappropriate and destructive ways, including the neglect of families and children. More than we realize, our whole society really rests on the capacity of its citizens to give what is called "obedience to the unenforceable." We do this by complying willingly with the law and behaving voluntarily according to time-tested standards. Such citizenship expresses a high form of volunteerism. In contrast, widespread and sustained lack of self-control will bring either severe external controls or anarchy. America's founders were determined to avoid both of those awful alternatives. The lack of self-control, collectively and individually, adds to our debt, to America's devastating drug problem, and to our growing crime. The quality of self-control is best grown in healthy, family gardens. Yet, so many families are failing. Healthy families are the first places in which we learn how to balance rights and responsibilities, and to take turns.

-Neal A. Maxwell, [Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 7/4/93](#)

...[E]ach priesthood holder should use his influence in the community to resist the erosion process which is taking place in our political and economic life. He should use the political party of his choice to express his evaluation of important issues. He should see that his party is working to preserve freedom, not destroy it. He should join responsible local groups interested in promoting freedom and free competitive enterprise, in studying political issues, appraising the voting records and proposed programs, and writing to members of Congress, promoting good men in public office and scrutinizing local, state, and federal agencies to see that the will of the people is being carried out. He should not wait for the Lord's servants to give instruction for every detail once they have announced the direction in which the priesthood should go. Each member should exercise prayerful judgment and then act.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1961, p. 75](#)

History teaches that when individuals have given up looking after their own economic needs and transferred a large share of that responsibility to the government, both they and the government have failed.

At least twenty great civilizations have disappeared. The pattern is shockingly similar. All, before their collapse, showed a decline in spiritual values, in moral stamina, and in the freedom and responsibility of their citizens. They showed such symptoms as deficit spending, excessive taxation, bloated bureaucracy, government paternalism, and generally a rather elaborate set of supports, controls, and regulations, affecting prices, wages, production, and consumption.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Pay Thy Debt, and Live," Address given at BYU, 2/28/62](#)

We posted the colors tonight and stood and gave a pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and the Republic for which it stands. We said, one nation under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all. That phrase, one nation under God, essentially comes from Abraham Lincoln. In the great Gettysburg address he stated, "This nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom." That phrase was not in the pledge of allegiance that was spoken when I was a boy. Back in those days, all of us in grade school, if the weather permitted, would form at the front steps of the school. The flag would be posted and we would recite together the pledge of allegiance before going into the building for our daily school work. I am grateful for the addition of the words, One Nation Under God. To me, it is tremendously meaningful.

-President Gordon B. Hinckley, [Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 1997](#)

Once government steps over [the] clear line between the protective or negative role into the aggressive role of redistributing the wealth and providing so-called "benefits" for some of its citizens, it becomes a means for legalized plunder. It becomes a lever of unlimited power which is the sought-after prize of unscrupulous individuals and pressure groups, each seeking to control the machine to fatten his own pockets or to benefit its favorite charities – all with the other fellow's money, of course.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Proper Role of Government," Address given at BYU, 10/21/68](#)

Today, brethren, we are in danger of actually surrendering our personal and property rights. This development, if it does occur in full form, will be a sad tragedy for our people. We must recognize that property rights are essential to human liberty.

Former United States Supreme Court Justice George Sutherland ... carefully stated it as follows: "It is not the right of property which is protected, but the right *to* property. Property, per se, has no rights; but the individual - the man - has three great rights, equally sacred from arbitrary interference; the right to his life, the right to his liberty, and the right to his property. The three rights are so bound together as to be essentially *one* right. To give a man his life, but deny him his liberty, is to take from him all that makes life worth living. To give him liberty but take from him the property which is the fruit and badge of his liberty, is to still leave him a slave."

- David O. McKay, [Conference Report, October 1962, p. 6](#)

Rather than impede communism, our policies in their total effect have apparently helped promote it. And so the honest in heart, many of whom have probably already been murdered, are deprived of the message of the restored gospel - good people who would have responded to the words of truth from our missionaries. Who then is to blame? What then can be done?

To some extent we Latter-day Saints and Americans everywhere must share some blame for we have not been awake to the warnings of the prophets. We have not exerted our righteous influence as citizens to stop this disastrous course. Our skirts are not entirely clean. Many of us have been asleep in Zion - the Western Hemisphere.

"But," say some, "why should we be so concerned? After all if the Lord wants them to get the gospel message, they'll get it."

Of course, if the Lord desired, he could this instant preach the gospel to every soul and do all our genealogical work. He could also right every wrong, feed the famished, plant our crops, train our children, etc. But his doctrine requires us to do our best ourselves in these areas and ask the Lord's help in our endeavors. After we've done all we can, then the Lord will cover for us.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1962, p. 18](#)

Most of the nations are losing the liberties they have had because they have not kept the commandments of the Lord. Most of the difficulty is the bid that is made by the leadership of nations to people that if they will follow the plan that the leaders map out, they will be fed and clothed without having to work so hard for it, but it does not work. People are being misled with the idea that they can get something for nothing and are not encouraged to work for what they need and desire.

-President George Albert Smith, [Conference Report, October 1950, p. 7](#)

The people are the source of government power; it is they who consented to a constitution that delegates certain powers to the government. I stress this fundamental by emphasizing what are *not* the sources of sovereign power. Sovereignty is not inherent in a state or nation just because it has the

power that comes from force of arms. Sovereignty does not come from the divine right of a king, who grants his subjects such power as he pleases or is forced to concede, as in the Magna Carta. And sovereignty does not rest in an aristocracy of self-appointed wise men who think that their high birth or prestigious education gives them the right to prescribe what is best for everyone else. Sovereignty is in the people as a whole, and their sovereignty is supreme, subject only to a few crucial limitations.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Fundamentals of Our Constitution," Address given at Salt Lake City, UT, 9/17/10](#)

In most of the world, we have been experiencing an extended and devastating economic recession. It was brought on by multiple causes, but one of the major causes was widespread dishonest and unethical conduct, particularly in the U.S. housing and financial markets. Reactions have focused on enacting more and stronger regulation. Perhaps that may dissuade some from unprincipled conduct, but others will simply get more creative in their circumvention. There could never be enough rules so finely crafted as to anticipate and cover every situation, and even if there were, enforcement would be impossibly expensive and burdensome. This approach leads to diminished freedom for everyone. In the memorable phrase of Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, "We would not accept the yoke of Christ; so now we must tremble at the yoke of Caesar."

In the end, it is only an internal moral compass in each individual that can effectively deal with the root causes as well as the symptoms of societal decay. Societies will struggle in vain to establish the common good until sin is denounced as sin and moral discipline takes its place in the pantheon of civic virtues.

-D. Todd Christofferson, ["Moral Discipline," Ensign, November 2009, pp. 106-7](#)

No true Latter-day Saint and no true American can be a socialist or a communist or support programs leading in that direction. These evil philosophies are incompatible with Mormonism, the true gospel of Jesus Christ.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1961, p. 74](#)

I would like here to recommend to all of you that you read the first two paragraphs and the last paragraph of the Declaration of Independence, for the purpose of getting a view as to why this government was set up. It was not set up as an eleemosynary (charitable) government to feed and clothe and nurture all the rest of the world. It was set up for the purpose of establishing a government which should bring peace and prosperity to the people of this nation, and when you have read those paragraphs read the Preamble to the Constitution itself.

-J. Reuben Clark, [Church News, 2/20/52](#)

For more than a half century, our national government has been acquiring additional powers by assuming functions previously left to state and local governments. This trend has now gone so far that the national government is beginning to direct what state and local governments must do and even how they must spend their limited revenues. This trend must be stopped and reversed, or we will cease to be the federal republic established in our inspired Constitution.

I am glad that some of our state governors are challenging this trend. I welcome their leadership in objecting to congressional action that commandeers the legislative and regulatory processes of the states to carry out federal directives not financed by the federal government. I hope many citizens will respond to such leadership and work to assure that state governments and their subsidiary local governments will continue to have a strong and effective role in our nation.

It is imperative that state governments have the power and the fiscal resources to respond to local needs and to capitalize on local strengths. That is the essence of federalism. But if federalism is to work, state governments must be willing to move against local and regional problems, such as clean air and water, and not wait for every such initiative to come from the national government. The current imbalance between the national and the state governments is just as much a product of state inaction as it is of national overreaching.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Some Responsibilities of Citizenship," Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 7/3/94](#)

In that same marvelous hymn, ([America the Beautiful](#)), we plead for God to mend America's every flaw. But can we both acknowledge our flaws productively and believe in the Mender? God's blessings will depend upon our behavior. We can be free from bondage and captivity if we serve God. Being worthy, therefore, of America's past, and deserving God's blessings in the future are vital, but not only for America. More hinges on what happens in America than we realize. It was so in the beginning, as the Declaration of Independence became one of the special acts in all of human history. It affected not only the people of America, but it spurred much of mankind. In a less-attended-to address in Independence Hall, February 1861, Abraham Lincoln said, "I have often pondered over the dangers which were incurred by the men who assembled here and framed and adopted that Declaration. I've pondered over the toils that were endured by the officers and soldiers of the army who achieved that independence. I've often inquired of myself," said Lincoln, "what great principle or idea it was that kept this confederacy so long together. It was not the mere matter of separation of the colonies from the motherland, but that sentiment in the Declaration of Independence which gave liberty not alone to the people of this country, but hope to all the world for a future time.

"It was," said Lincoln, "that in due time the weights would be lifted from the shoulders of all men and that all should have an equal chance. This," he said, "is the sentiment embodied in the Declaration of Independence." America, with all of its problems is still a beacon. This beacon needs to shine more brightly today for the sake of all mankind in order to continue to give, in Lincoln's words, "hope to all the world."

-Neal A. Maxwell, [Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 7/4/93](#)

As M. J. Sobran recently wrote: "A religious conviction is now a second-class conviction, expected to step deferentially to the back of the secular bus, and not to get uppity about it."

There are probably many reasons for the change in public attitudes toward religion. Certainly we've had too many wolves posing as shepherds, prompting a national skepticism toward any who profess to represent God. The news media, which rarely report on the good things churches are doing in the world, almost never miss an opportunity to tell people when active church members do wrong. We read about crimes that are committed by former Sunday School teachers, ministers, or missionaries. But when was

the last time you read that a crime was committed by someone who hasn't stepped inside a church in forty years?

-M. Russell Ballard, ["Religion in a Free Society," Ensign, October 1992](#)

History is not an accident. Events are foreknown to God. His superintending influence is behind the actions of his righteous children. Long before America was even discovered, the Lord was moving and shaping events that would lead to the coming forth of the remarkable form of government established by the Constitution. America had to be free and independent to fulfill this destiny.

-President Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Constitution - A Heavenly Banner," Address given at BYU, 9/16/86](#)

In our nation's founding and in our constitutional order, the First Amendment guarantees of religious freedom and the freedoms of speech and press are the motivating and dominating civil liberties and civil rights. Appropriately, the guarantee of freedom of religion is the first expression in the Bill of Rights of the United States Constitution, and it is embodied in the constitutions of all 50 of our states.

For many Americans, the free exercise of religion is the basic civil liberty because faith in God and His teachings and the active practice of religion are the most fundamental guiding realities of life.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Strengthening the Free Exercise of Religion," Address given on 5/16/13](#)

The Book of Mormon also tells us of some of the perverse reasoning the devil will use in our day to keep the Saints ignorant, complacent and asleep.

"And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well – and thus the devil cheateth their souls and leadeth them away carefully down to hell."

Now this reasoning takes several forms. For instance, "Don't worry," say some, "the Lord will take care of us." This is the usual theme of those who believe in faith without works.

Brigham Young said: *"Some may say, 'I have faith the Lord will turn them away.' What ground have we to hope this? Have I any good reason to say to my Father in Heaven, 'Fight my battles,' when he has given me the sword to wield, the arm and the brain that I can fight for myself? Can I ask Him to fight my battles and sit quietly down waiting for Him to do so? I cannot. I can pray the people to harken to wisdom, to listen to counsel; but to ask God to do for me that which I can do for myself is preposterous to my mind."*

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

Another great fundamental of the United States Constitution is its federal system, which divides government powers between the nation and the various states. This principle of federalism is at the heart of our Constitution. Unlike the next two fundamentals I will discuss, which were adaptations of

earlier developments in English law, this division of sovereignty between two government levels was unprecedented in theory or practice. In a day when it is fashionable to assume that the national government has the power and means to right every perceived injustice, we should remember that the United States Constitution limits the national government to the exercise of powers expressly granted to it.

The Tenth Amendment provides: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively or to the people."

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Fundamentals of Our Constitution," Address given at Salt Lake City, UT, 9/17/10](#)

Let me pause a moment to point out some pro-communist propaganda which has been widely circulated. It is frequently stated that Communism is on the extreme left and Fascism is on the extreme right. This is absolutely false. It is true that Communism is on the extreme left, but Nazism and Fascism are so closely allied with Communism that J. Edgar Hoover has called Communism, Red Fascism and Nazism, Black Fascism. They are all forms of Socialism. And, as has been pointed out by well-informed people in the West, they are all forms of "GOVERNMENTISM" where the government becomes lord and master and we become serfs and slaves.

The extreme right is composed of the anarchists who believe that people are so good at heart that no government at all is needed. Our forefathers knew that, while most people try to do the right thing, there are a few who run amuck. They, therefore, established our great constitutional Republic - a government of limited powers. They believed that we must have some government but it must be bound down by the chains of our Constitution, so that it will not slip farther and farther over into the realm of "GOVERNMENTISM" whether it be Communism, Nazism, Fascism, Welfare-Statism or some other form of Socialism.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["A Race Against Time," Address given at BYU, 12/10/64](#)

With prophetic vision Lincoln ... spoke of the dangers inherent in mob violence and disregard for law and order, which he said could destroy our country. Then he said this:

"How shall we fortify against it? The answer is simple. Let every American, every lover of liberty, every well wisher of his posterity swear by the blood of the revolution never to violate in the least particular the laws of the country and never to tolerate their violation by others. As the patriots of '76 did to support the Declaration of Independence, so to support the Constitution and laws let every American pledge his life, his property, and his sacred honor."

Lincoln was prophetic. We dare not ignore his warnings...

Is it not a striking coincidence that our national leaders as well as our scriptures both speak of the same thing, that we must obey the God of the land or be swept off? If we fail and take freedom down into the destruction with us, the free world will also fall, for we are the greatest protection freedom has among all the nations.

-Mark E. Petersen, ["America - World Leader," Address given at BYU, 7/4/76](#)

I do not believe the greatest threat to our future is from bombs or guided missiles. I do not think our civilization will die that way. I think it will die when we no longer care – when the spiritual forces that make us wish to be right and noble die in the hearts of men...

If America is destroyed, it may be by Americans who salute the flag, sing the national anthem, march in patriotic parades, cheer Fourth of July speakers. Normally good Americans, but Americans who fail to comprehend what is required to keep our country strong and free. Americans who have been lulled away into a false security. Great nations are never conquered from the outside unless they are rotten inside. Our greatest national problem today is erosion – not the erosion of the soil, but the erosion of the national morality, erosion of traditional enforcement of law and order. In this blessed land we have exalted security, comfort, and ease above freedom.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["The American Challenge," Address given at BYU, 4/21/70](#)

Brethren, if we had done our homework and were faithful, we could step forward at this time and help save this country. The fact that most of us are unprepared to do it is an indictment we will have to bear. The longer we wait, the heavier the chains, the deeper the blood, the more the persecution and the less we can carry out our God-given mandate and world-wide mission. The war in heaven is raging on earth today. Are you being neutralized in the battle?

"Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness; For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves..." (D&C 58:27-28).

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1965, p. 125](#)

Unexciting as a prescription; nevertheless, the best single way to improve the quality of life in America is to improve the quality of our own individual lives and our own neighborhoods. Otherwise, citizen failures to respect property or to practice chastity and fidelity, with all of those consequences, and with all of those failures, cannot be corrected by mere legislation. Similarly, our neglect of the poor or of our civic duties cannot be corrected by executive orders. Our inspired Constitution is wisely designed to protect us from excesses of political power, but it can do little to protect us from the excesses of appetite, or from individual indifference to great principles or institutions.

Any significant unraveling of the moral fiber of the American people, therefore, finally imperils the constitution. The moral fabric of this society can become dangerously and relentlessly frayed as too few strands strain to hold us together. Hence, having a shared, patriotic, spiritual and moral commitment within this nation's borders is as vital as defending those borders. Therefore, while great leaders are needed, so also are informed and wise followers.

-Neal A. Maxwell, [Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 7/4/93](#)

It is the destiny of America which makes her the greatest nation on earth. No other nation was ever conceived and set up as was ours. No other nation has been given a destiny such as ours.

What is that destiny? You will be surprised when I say this, but it is nevertheless true. The destiny of the United States of America is to play an important part in helping to prepare for the second coming of Christ. It is that important. That is the reason the United States was set up.

-Mark E. Petersen, ["America - World Leader," Address given at BYU, 7/4/76](#)

I love the Stars and Stripes, and the American Way of Life. I have faith in the Constitution of the United States. I believe that only through a truly educated citizenry can the ideals that inspired the Founding Fathers of our nation be preserved and perpetuated.

I believe that four fundamental elements in such an education are:

1. The basic essentials of oral and written composition - arithmetic, social studies and science.
2. Loyal leadership as found in men who "cannot be bought or sold, men who will scorn to violate truth, genuine gold."
3. Open and forcible teaching of facts regarding communism as an enemy to God and to individual freedom.
4. More emphasis on moral and spiritual values.

-President David O. McKay, [Church News](#), 3/13/54

Unfortunately, protections afforded to freedom of religion and belief are often weak, unheeded, and attacked. Powerful pressures attempt to restrain religious freedom even as it grows – and even in countries that historically protected it most vigorously. These pressures have the upper hand or are gaining ground in many countries...

Virtually all Western democracies claim to believe in the *principle* of religious freedom. It is the application of the principle that can create controversy. Threats to religious freedom typically arise when religious people and institutions seek to say or do something – or refuse to say or do something – that runs counter to the philosophy or goals of those in power, including political majorities. Religion is often countercultural and thus unpopular. For this reason, religious freedom, even where it is generally supported in principle, is often vigorously opposed in practice.

-D. Todd Christofferson, ["A Celebration of Religious Freedom," Sao Paulo, Brazil, 4/29/15](#)

We are not given the step-by-step backsliding of [the] Jareditic civilization till it reached the social and governmental chaos the record sets out, but those steps seem wholly clear from the results. Put into modern terms, we can understand them. First there was a forsaking of the righteous life, and the working of wickedness; then must have come the extortion and oppression of the poor by the rich; then retaliation and reprisal by the poor against the rich; then would come a cry to share the wealth which should belong to all; then the easy belief that society owed every man a living whether he worked or not; then the keeping of a great body of idlers; then when community revenues failed to do this, as they always have failed and always will fail, a self-helping by one to the goods of his neighbor; and finally when the neighbor resisted, as resist he must, or starve with his family, then death to the neighbor and all that belonged to him. This was the decreed "fullness of iniquity."

Then came the end; the Jaredites were wiped out in accordance with "the everlasting decree of God." A nation had been born; it had grown to maturity; then to a powerful manhood; had then gone on to sin, decay, and destruction, and all because its people had refused to heed the promises and commandments of Him who is their Creator and Father, all because the people who possessed the land had failed "to serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ."

-J. Reuben Clark, 1940, [The Improvement Era, 43:397](#)

To have citizenship in this great Republic should make every man's heart respond in loyalty and look with distrust and condemnation upon anybody who is the beneficiary of the freedom vouchsafed by the Constitution and who will undermine it or seek to destroy the liberty of the individual. Now is the time for us to keep our eyes open, for there are sinister men abroad who would destroy the liberties of our country.

Let us pray every day of our lives for the Lord to frustrate their sinister plans - plans of Communists, who disbelieve in God, who deny the existence of God, who disbelieve in the freedom of the individual, who think he should be just a spoke in the wheel of the State! The State is established to protect the individual in his rights.

-President David O. McKay, [Church News](#), 12/12/53

"There is no need to learn about communism in order to avoid it," some argue. But this counsel can help keep our people in ignorance and apparently flies in the face of the inspired counsel of President McKay who said, *"I believe that only through a truly educated citizenry can the ideals that inspired the Founding Fathers of our nation be preserved and perpetuated."*

And then President McKay said that one of the "four fundamental elements in such an education" was the "open and forcible teaching of the facts regarding communism as an enemy to God and to individual freedom."

Do we teach people to avoid alcohol and tobacco by pointing out its evil effects? Of course we do. Should we then avoid telling people about the evil nature and devious designs of communism – the greatest satanical threat to the spread of God's work?

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

The doctrine of work lies at the very foundation of the capitalistic system. Many people misunderstand and misinterpret capitalism. They think that because the word "capital" is used to designate the system that its chief purpose is to make wealthy men who are usually called capitalists and whose wealth, it is feared, is too often accumulated at the expense of poorer classes. I admit that there are instances, altogether too many, where this comes about. But this is not the true concept of capitalism. The capitalistic system in its inner essence is little, if anything, more than a man's free right to work, to choose his work, and enjoy the rewards of his efforts. In my estimation, it is a most precious thing and it is indispensable to the liberty and freedom of which America boasts. It is the only tried and tested

system of free enterprise in this world and every other opposing system is built on an abridgment of personal liberty. For one I do not want to lose it.

But we will lose it if we do not understand it and recognize its virtues. It is not the capitalistic system itself that makes some men rich and some men poor. The men themselves do that, again with some exceptions. The system merely offers the opportunities. There are, of course, abuses within it, as there must always be when humanity is involved. It does not guarantee that all men will be rich, and it is worthy of note that all systems which do usually succeed only in making all poor.

-Stephen L. Richards, [Conference Report, October 1939, p. 67](#)

John Strachey, a top official in the Labor Socialist party of Great Britain, in his book entitled The Theory and Practice of Socialism said: "It is impossible to establish communism as the immediate successor to capitalism. It is accordingly proposed to establish socialism as something which we can put in the place of our present decaying capitalism. Hence, communists work for the establishment of socialism as a necessary transition stage on the road to communism."

The paramount issue today is liberty against creeping socialism. It is in this spirit that President McKay stated: "Communism is antagonistic to the American way of life. Its avowed purpose is to destroy belief in God and free enterprise... The fostering of full economic freedom lies at the base of our liberties. Only in perpetuating economic freedom can our social, political, and religious liberties be preserved."

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1961, p. 73-4](#)

I appeal to you, every one, to be true to the trust that God has placed in you, to preach the gospel throughout the world, as has been declared here today. But remember that you cannot preach that gospel without freedom of speech, and you cannot publish that gospel without freedom of the press, and you cannot gather together in congregations without freedom of assembly, and you cannot worship the Lord your God according to the dictates of your own conscience without freedom of religion. And remember that every time you give up any of your freedoms, whether it be to some economic or political group, or to any other group, you jeopardize these four freedoms of which I have spoken.

-Mark E. Petersen, [Conference Report, April 1946, p. 172](#)

Decrease the belief in God, and you increase the numbers of those who wish to play at being God by being "society's supervisors." Such "supervisors" deny the existence of divine standards, but are very serious about imposing their own standards on society.

It is no accident that the lessening, or loss, of belief in certain absolute truths, such as the existence of God and the reality of immortality, has occurred at the same time there has been a sharp gain in the size and power of governments in many portions of the world. Once we remove belief in God from the center of our lives, as the Source of truth and as a Determiner of justice, a tremendous vacuum is created into which selfishness surges, a condition which governments delight in managing. Trends become a theology. A religion of regulations emerges in which tens of thousands of regulations seek to replace the Ten Commandments.

And with this secular religion comes a frightening insistence on orthodoxy, enforced by the withdrawal and bestowal of benefits. Such governments inevitably tend to enlarge taxes and to stunt their citizens.

-Neal A. Maxwell, ["The Prohibitive Costs of a Value-Free Society," Ensign, October 1978](#)

[The American Government] is the best earthly government that ever was framed by man, and the true and righteous are alone worthy of it. It cannot long be administered by wicked hands. "When the wicked rule, the people mourn."

-President Brigham Young, 1862, [Journal of Discourses, 9:368](#)

Yes, I love this nation. To me it is not just another nation, not just a member of the family of nations. It is a great and glorious nation with a divine mission, brought into being under the inspiration of heaven. It is truly a land choice above all others. I thank God for the knowledge which we have regarding the prophetic history and the spiritual foundation of this great land in America.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["This Nation Shall Endure," Address given at BYU, 12/4/73](#)

Let the people see to it that they get righteous men to be their leaders, who will labor with their hands and administer to their own necessities, sit in judgment, legislate, and govern in righteousness; and officers that are filled with peace; and see to it that every man that goes forth among the people as a travelling officer is full of the fear of the Lord, and would rather do right at a sacrifice than do wrong for a reward.

...We want men to rule the nation who care more for and love better the nation's welfare than gold and silver, fame, or popularity.

-President Brigham Young, 1854, [Journal of Discourses, 7:12](#)

There are those in this nation today who would delete all this reference to Deity. They would take it out of the pledge of allegiance. They would take it from our coinage. They would remove it from any mention in our national life. John Wesley Heele has written, "Gettysburg was the high water mark of the rebellion. It involved the destiny of the union. Realizing this, it was Lincoln who, while battle was being fought, was driven to his knees to struggle like Jacob of old, alone with God, until in Lincoln's own words, "God told me he would give me Gettysburg and I believed Him." When the news of the victory reached him, he gave to God the glory and set aside a day of national thanksgiving.

When Mrs. Margaret Thatcher was on this campus and I was talking with her, she said, "I cannot understand it; you have the motto, In God We Trust on your coinage and yet you cannot mention the name of Deity in the classrooms of your schools." She wondered, and I wonder about our consistency.

-President Gordon B. Hinckley, [Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 1997](#)

When was the last time you saw religion or people of faith portrayed positively in any film or television program? For the most part, Hollywood's attitude toward religion is typified by the expression of cartoon character Bart Simpson, whose mealtime grace consisted of these words: "Dear God, we pay for all this stuff ourselves, so thanks for nothing." Can you imagine how embarrassed and disappointed our Founding Fathers would be to know of the blasphemous disregard many of those of the media have for God our Eternal Father. In fact, noted film critic Michael Medved accuses Hollywood of a deliberate attempt to undermine organized religion: "A war against standards leads logically and inevitably to hostility to religion, because it is religious faith that provides the ultimate basis for all standards."

Organized religion finds itself increasingly on the defensive. Not only are people questioning the right of the church—*any* church—to be involved in matters of public policy, but some are even beginning to wonder whether the church is entitled to exert any kind of meaningful influence on people's lives. As one churchgoer recently said on a radio talk show, "I think the world of my minister—as long as he doesn't try to tell me how to live my life."

Is it any wonder, then, that religion now finds itself under attack in legislative assemblies and in the courts?

-M. Russell Ballard, ["Religion in a Free Society," Ensign, October 1992](#)

No government in the history of mankind has ever created any wealth. People who work create wealth. James R. Evans, in his inspiring book, "The Glorious Quest" gives this simple illustration of legalized plunder:

"Assume, for example, that we were farmers, and that we received a letter from the government telling us that we were going to get a thousand dollars this year for plowed up acreage. But rather than the normal method of collection, we were to take this letter and collect \$69.71 from Bill Brown, at such and such an address, and \$82.47 from Henry Jones, \$59.80 from a Bill Smith, and so on down the line; that these men would make up our farm subsidy. Neither you nor I, nor would 99 percent of the farmers of this country, walk up and ring a man's doorbell, hold out a hand and say, 'Give me what you've earned even though I have not.' We simply wouldn't do it because we would be facing directly the violation of a moral law, 'Thou shalt not steal.' In short, we would be held accountable for our actions."

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Proper Role of Government," Address given at BYU, 10/21/68](#)

This principle of limited national powers, with all residuary powers reserved to the people or to the state and local governments, which are most responsive to the people, is one of the great fundamentals of the United States Constitution.

In my lifetime I have seen much neglect of this fundamental constitutional principle. For example, the power to make laws on personal relationships is one of those powers not granted to the federal government and therefore reserved to the states. Thus, the ordinary laws governing marriage and family rights and duties are state laws, subject to the power of national law to govern the extent to which the law of one state is binding on others. The dominance of state law in these personal matters would have been changed by the Equal Rights Amendment (E.R.A.) proposed about 30 years ago. The dominance of state law will also be changed if, after full review, federal courts decree that a state law on marriage is

invalid under the United States Constitution. Whatever the merits of current controversies over the laws of marriage and child adoption and the like, let us not forget that if the decisions of federal courts can override the actions of state lawmakers on this subject, we have suffered a significant constitutional reallocation of lawmaking power from the lawmaking branch to the judicial branch and from the states to the federal government.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Fundamentals of Our Constitution," Address given at Salt Lake City, UT, 9/17/10](#)

John Stewart Mill counseled as follows: "A people may prefer free government, but if, from indolence, or carelessness, or cowardice, or want of public spirit, they are unequal to the exertion necessary for preserving it; if they will not fight for it when it is directly attacked; if they can be deluded by the artifices used to cheat them out of it; if by momentary discouragement, or temporary panic, or a fit of enthusiasm for an individual, they can be induced to lay their liberties at the feet of even a great man, or trust him with powers which enable him to subvert their institutions; in all of these cases they are more or less unfit for liberty. And though it may be for their good to have had it even for a short time, they are unlikely long to enjoy it..."

Citizenship and leadership are intertwined; so are individual morality and constitutional viability; so are rights and responsibilities. Our various constitutional freedoms are likewise irrevocably intertwined.

-Neal A. Maxwell, [Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 7/4/93](#)

Unfortunately, we as a nation have apostatized in various degrees from different Constitutional principles as proclaimed by the inspired founders...

For centuries our forefathers suffered and sacrificed that we might be the recipients of the blessings of freedom. If they were willing to sacrifice so much to establish us as a free people, should we not be willing to do the same to maintain that freedom for ourselves and for future generations?

Only in this foreordained land, under its God-inspired Constitution and the resulting environment of freedom, was it possible to have established the restored church. It is our responsibility to see that this freedom is perpetuated so that the Church may more easily flourish in the future.

-President Ezra Taft Benson, [October 1987 General Conference](#)

We, the people of the United States, guarantee full religious freedom to all within our jurisdiction, whether they be non-Christian or Pagan. But the nation itself is a Christian nation. Our standards and principles are Christian. Other creeds we protect, that all may be free. These facts must never be lost sight of. For us of the Church this fact cannot be challenged, for the Lord has declared in modern revelation:

"Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ, who hath been manifested by the things which we have written." (Ether 2:12)

The penalty of disobedience to these principles has been declared to be that the people shall “be swept off when the fullness of his wrath should come upon them,” and that “the fullness of his wrath cometh upon them when they are ripened in iniquity.” (Ether 2:8-9)

These principles have been repeatedly declared. Thus we of America can stand for no cause which would dethrone Christianity here and put in its place any other creed, whether non-Christian or Pagan; nor can we as Christians support a cause designed to set up non-Christian or Pagan states elsewhere in the world. Our duty, divinely imposed, is clear on this.

-J. Reuben Clark, [Conference Report, October 1939, p. 10](#)

Powerful secular interests are challenging the way religious beliefs and the practices of faith-based organizations stand in the way of their secular aims. We are alarmed at the many – and increasing – circumstances in which actions based on the free exercise of religion are sought to be swept aside or subordinated to the asserted “civil rights” of officially favored classes...

Religious freedom must not be seen as something serving only the interests of churches and synagogues. It must be understood as a protection for religious people, whether or not their beliefs involve membership or behavior. Support for the First Amendment free exercise of religion should not be limited to those who intend to exercise it, individually or through denominational affiliation.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [“Strengthening the Free Exercise of Religion,” Address given on 5/16/13](#)

In the Kirtland Temple dedicatory prayer, given on March 27, 1836, the Lord directed the Prophet Joseph to say: "May those principles, which were so honorably and nobly defended, namely, the Constitution of our land, by our fathers, be established forever" (D&C 109:54).

A few years later, Joseph Smith, while unjustly incarcerated in a cold and depressing cell of Liberty Jail at Clay County, Missouri, frequently bore his testimony of the document's divinity: "The Constitution of the United States is a glorious standard; it is founded in a wisdom of God. It is a heavenly banner."

-President Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Constitution - A Heavenly Banner," Address given at BYU, 9/16/86](#)

Free agency underlies all of God’s laws. It is God’s law of liberty. It is the basis of existence. God wants men to do good, but he never forces them and does not want them to be forced. He placed in and left with them the power of election. When they do good, he honors them because they could have done evil. When they are coerced, they are entitled to no such honor. God allows men to make their own choices, and he has reserved to himself the judgment as to the correctness of their choices.

Free agency has always had rough going, however. Over it the War in Heaven was fought. In the earth it has been abridged by almost all governments, civil and ecclesiastical. Apostate churchmen, kings, and other rulers have from the beginning arrogated judgment unto themselves. They have, contrary to God’s law of liberty, preempted man’s right, with or without his consent, to determine what would be best for them to do and by every means within their power have undertaken to force men to do their bidding.

We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion (D&C 121:39).

-Marion G. Romney, ["America's Fate and Ultimate Destiny," Address given at BYU, 5/2/76](#)

In the pantheon of ideas in our divinely-inspired constitution, the idea that the government is limited to the powers expressly and impliedly conferred by the Constitution is second only to the principle that the people are sovereign.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Some Responsibilities of Citizenship," Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 7/3/94](#)

As members of the Church we have some close quarters to pass through if we are to save our souls. As the Church gets larger some men have increasing responsibility and more and more duties must be delegated. We all have stewardships for which we must account to the Lord.

Unfortunately some men who do not honor their stewardships may have an adverse effect on many people. Often the greater the man's responsibility the more good or evil he can accomplish. The Lord usually gives a man a long enough rope and sufficient time to determine whether that man wants to pull himself into the presence of God or drop off somewhere below.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

Can we really afford a society in which we do not believe in the principle of work? Inflation has several causes, but any lasting cure must include increased productivity. Besides, work is a spiritual necessity, even if it is not an economic necessity, which it is.

Can we really afford a society in which the family, our most basic institution, is further diminished? Most of us revolt at the idea of having children raised by the state, but step by small step we are moving in that direction. If our society's success depends on having a critical mass of citizens with a sense of fair play and justice, and with love and concern for others, where do citizens usually acquire those crucial virtues, if we acquire them at all? We usually acquire them first and best in the family. The family garden, as has been said, is still the best place to grow happy humans. Society already pays terrible costs for the products of tragically flawed families, but if our nation further undermines the average family, the costs will be catastrophic.

-Neal A. Maxwell, ["The Prohibitive Costs of a Value-Free Society," Ensign, October 1978](#)

For a hundred years boys and girls born in America, and they who later obtained citizenship in this great country, have felt that they are 'endowed by their Creator, with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,' and that these rights are endowed by our Creator.

Recent rulings of the Supreme Court would have all reference to a Creator eliminated from our public schools and public offices. It is a sad day when the Supreme Court of the United States would discourage

all reference in our schools to the influence of the phrase "divine providence" as used by our founders of the Declaration of Independence.

Evidently the Supreme Court misinterprets the true meaning of the First Amendment and are now leading a Christian nation down the road to atheism.

-President David O. McKay, Church News, 6/22/63

There are those who recommend that the clash between communism and freedom be avoided through disarmament agreements. Abolishing our military strength and adopting an unenforceable contract as a substitute to protect us would go down in history as the greatest mistake free men could make in a time of peril.

President McKay declared: "Force rules in the world today; consequently, our government must keep armies abroad, build navies and air squadrons, create atom bombs to protect itself from the threatened aggression of a nation which seems to listen to no other appeal than compulsion."

This parallels the historic statement by George Washington when he vigorously warned: "There is a rank due the United States among the nations that will be totally lost by the reputation of weakness. If we would avoid insult we must be able to repel it; if we would secure the peace, it must be known that we are at all times ready for war."

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1961, p. 72](#)

With reference to the United Nations and spurious appendages, I would like to quote the Internal Security Annual Report for 1956, p. 213, as made by the Senate Internal Security Sub-Committee, as follows: "What appears, on the surface at least, to be by far the worst danger spot, from the standpoint of disloyalty and subversive activity among Americans employed by international organizations, is UNESCO - the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization." Then, in the footnote, we see this: "Information in the possession of the sub-committee, indicating a great deal of evidence not yet publicly adduced, points to the possibility that the parent body, the United Nations, may be the worst 'spot' of all." There is no indication that there has been the slightest improvement in the United Nations or its satellites since that time...

Commenting on the United Nations Charter and the "travesty on exhaustive consideration" as the charter was hastily approved by the Congress, under urging from the State Department, (President J. Reuben Clark) continues with a devastating analysis and a sober warning to the American people that there will be a day of reckoning. I believe that day is near at hand. The hopes and aspirations of the people have been betrayed. I hope this scholarly, unpublished memorandum by President Clark with its penetrating analysis will someday soon be available in full. Meantime, I urge all to read that solid volume, Stand Fast by the Constitution, which embodies much of J. Reuben Clark's timely instruction. Meantime let us have no further blind devotion to the communist-dominated United Nations.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["A Race Against Time," Address given at BYU, 12/10/64](#)

The United States Supreme Court recently discontinued the time-honored judicial standard that gave considerable legal latitude to the free exercise of religion. Allowing people of faith to practice their religion free from the burdening effects of public policy is, according to the court, “a luxury that can no longer be afforded.” While the justices acknowledged that the ruling would “place at a relative disadvantage those religious practices that are not widely engaged in,” they said it was “an unavoidable consequence of a democratic government.” (*Oregon Employment Division v. Smith*, 1990.)

I do not promote the religious practice that was in question in that case but I am concerned with the long-term implications of the decision. Wherever religious groups are in the minority and are not considered part of the mainline religious community, the potential for state intrusion upon their religious practices is real. With legislative bodies responding most often to the will of the majority, the free exercise of religion by minority faith groups is in peril.

-M. Russell Ballard, ["Religion in a Free Society," Ensign, October 1992](#)

I am grateful for the Founding Fathers of this land and for the freedom they have vouchsafed to us. I am grateful that they recognized, as great leaders of this nation have always recognized, that the freedom which we enjoy did not originate with the Founding Fathers, that this glorious principle, this great boon of freedom and respect for the dignity of man, came as a gift from the Creator.

The Founding Fathers, it is true, with superb genius welded together the safeguards of [our] freedoms. It was necessary, however, for them to turn to the scriptures, to religion, in order to have their great experiment make sense to them. And so our freedom is God-given. It antedates the Founding Fathers.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["This Nation Shall Endure," Address given at BYU, 12/4/73](#)

The miracle of Constitution writing at Philadelphia was soon followed by a second miracle, less known to the American people. I refer to the miracle of the ratification of the Constitution. The battle raged for about ten months. Most of the same individuals raised up to write the Constitution also labored to secure its ratification, but not all. Fighting ratification were prestigious and influential patriots like Samuel Adams (who helped start the Revolution), James Winthrop, George Mason, James Monroe (later to be the fifth president), and Patrick Henry. In Pennsylvania, anti-Constitutionalists tried to stay away from the ratification meeting in order to prevent the formation of the required quorum for ratification. Finally, two of the recalcitrant, anti-federalist assemblymen were dragged in and held in their seats until the business was successfully concluded. It was no picnic in the park.

In December, after Pennsylvania ratified the Constitution, a mob attacked James Wilson, the distinguished Founding Father, and beat him. Rhode Island didn't even ratify until after the new government was functioning. New Hampshire narrowly approved: 57-46. Virginia approved by a margin of only ten votes out of 168. New York approved by the narrowest margin of 30-27. It was a second miracle.

-Neal A. Maxwell, [Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 7/4/93](#)

No political party is justified to continue in existence unless it clearly states the principles which it advocates, the platform upon which its candidates stand, and then with integrity, when and if elected, carry out those principles and live up to that platform. Except that be the case, we as Latter-day Saints should not align ourselves to any party, because we do not have the basis upon which we can make an intelligent decision. We must know what they stand for before we can favor them with our vote.

I do not ask you, my brethren and sisters, to go to the polls and just vote, important as that is; but that when you vote, you vote intelligently for those principles and those things and those men which will give to you the kind of government you want, the kind of environment that you desire for yourself and for your posterity.

-Henry D. Moyle, [Conference Report, April 1952, p. 36](#)

I take as my theme the words of President David O. McKay, God's mouthpiece on the earth today, a prophet of God: "The position of this church on the subject of communism has never changed. We consider it the greatest satanical threat to peace, prosperity and the spread of God's work among men that exists on the face of the earth.

"No greater immediate responsibility rests upon the members of the Church, upon all citizens of this republic and of neighboring republics, than to protect the freedom vouchsafed by the Constitution of the United States."

In the days of the prophet Noah, men had no greater responsibility than to repent and board the ark. In our day, the day of the prophet David O. McKay, he has said that we have no greater immediate responsibility than to protect the freedom vouchsafed by the Constitution of the United States.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

The Bill of Rights begins with what many believe to be the most important guarantee in the United States Constitution. The First Amendment reads: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

The prohibition against "an establishment of religion" was intended to separate churches and government, to prevent a national church of the kind found in Europe. In the interest of time I will say no more about the establishment of religion, but only concentrate on the direction that the United States shall have no law prohibiting the free exercise of religion. For nearly a century this guarantee of religious freedom has been understood as a limitation on state as well as federal power.

The guarantee of the free exercise of religion, which I will call religious freedom, is one of the supremely important founding principles in the United States Constitution, and it is reflected in the constitutions of all of our 50 states. It is the first expression in the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. As noted by many, this "pre-eminent place" identifies freedom of religion as "a cornerstone of American democracy." I maintain that in our nation's founding and in our constitutional order, religious freedom, and the freedoms of speech and press associated with it in the First Amendment, are the motivating and dominating civil liberties and civil rights.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Fundamentals of Our Constitution," Address given at Salt Lake City, UT, 9/17/10](#)

There are some regrettable things being said and done by some people in the Church today. As President Clark so well warned, "The ravening wolves are amongst us, from our own membership and they, more than any others, are clothed in sheep's clothing because they wear the habiliments of the priesthood... We should be careful of them."

Sometimes from behind the pulpit, in our classrooms, in our Council meetings and in our church publications we hear, read or witness things that do not square with the truth. This is especially true where freedom is involved. Now do not let this serve as an excuse for your own wrong-doing. The Lord is letting the wheat and the tares mature before he fully purges the Church. He is also testing you to see if you will be misled. The devil is trying to deceive the very elect.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

For centuries [the Lord] preserved this land from colonization by unwanted groups. Then he set up this nation by his own power and for his own purpose. That purpose was to provide the free conditions under which he could restore his gospel in the last days.

Here he gave us an inspired Constitution so that his church could move forward with full guarantee of freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom of assembly, and freedom of press—all of which were essential to his work.

Dictatorship is the opposite of free agency. Free agency is part and parcel of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence, free agency was required here in America so that God's work could move forward; and so it must, for the day of the Lord draweth nigh and the ultimate destiny of the United States is rapidly emerging.

Here in the USA the Lord's latter-day Zion has been established already. Here in the USA his latter-day New Jerusalem will yet be established. Here in the USA the Lord will preside during the Millennium. From here will go forth the law and the word of the Lord to all the nations of the earth.

-Mark E. Petersen, ["America - World Leader," Address given at BYU, 7/4/76](#)

We must give greater attention to the education of the rising generation. If the foundation of religious liberty is weakening, it must be because the role of religion and the contribution of religious organizations and religiously motivated people in our nation is not sufficiently understood. The rising generation is not being taught these things.

I believe that a study of the treatment of religion in elementary and secondary textbooks over the last half-century would show a significant decline in the description and stated importance of religion in the founding of our nation and the progress of our civilization.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Strengthening the Free Exercise of Religion," Address given on 5/16/13](#)

If people are not permitted to advocate, to assert, and to bring to bear, in every legitimate way, the opinions and views they hold that grow out of their religious convictions, what manner of men and

women would they be, anyway? Our founding fathers did not wish to have a state church established nor to have a particular religion favored by government. They wanted religion to be free to make its own way. But neither did they intend to have irreligion made into a favored state church. Notice the terrible irony if this trend were to continue. When the secular church goes after its heretics, where are the sanctuaries? To what landfalls and Plymouth Rocks can future pilgrims go?

If we let come into being a secular church shorn of traditional and divine values, where shall we go for inspiration in the crises of tomorrow? Can we appeal to the rightness of a specific regulation to sustain us in our hours of need? Will we be able to seek shelter under a First Amendment which by then may have been twisted to favor irreligion? Will we be able to rely for counterforce on value education in school systems that are increasingly secularized? And if our governments and schools were to fail us, would we be able to fall back upon the institution of the family, when so many secular movements seek to shred it?

-Neal A. Maxwell, ["Meeting the Challenges of Today," Address given at BYU, 10/10/78](#)

As boys who would grow to become citizens of this nation, we repeated the scout oath including these words: "On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country." Now even that is being challenged in the courts of the land. According to the Wall Street Journal, the state of New Jersey last year passed a law banishing the mention of God from state courtroom oaths. Following this action by the legislature, a county judge decided to ban Bibles for such oaths because, "You know who is mentioned inside."

Without acknowledgement of deity, without recognition of the Almighty as the ruling power of the universe, the all important element of personal and national accountability shrinks and dies. Are we so arrogant as to believe that we can get along without Him? We see the manifestation of that arrogance in the great host of social problems with which we deal these days: teen pregnancy, abandoned families and broken homes, failure to recognize the property and rights of others, gangs of young people aimlessly cruising the streets of our cities, and many other problems like these have resulted in substantial part at least, from failure to recognize that there is a God to whom someday, each of us must give an accounting.

-President Gordon B. Hinckley, [Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 1997](#)

The following declaration of principles are those which I would like to give you in summary and to which I subscribe. As an independent American for constitutional government:

1. I believe that no people can maintain freedom unless their political institutions are founded upon faith in God and belief in the existence of moral law.
2. I believe that God has endowed men with certain unalienable rights as set forth in the Declaration of Independence and that no man, no legislature and no majority, however great, may morally limit or destroy these; that the sole function of government is to protect life, liberty, and property and anything more than this is usurpation and oppression.

3. I believe that the Constitution of the United States was prepared and adopted by men acting under inspiration of Almighty God; that it is a solemn compact between the peoples of the States of this nation which all officers of government are under duty to obey; that the eternal moral laws expressed therein must be adhered to or individual liberty will perish.

4. I believe it a violation of the Constitution for government to deprive the individual of either life, liberty, or property except for these purposes: (a) Punish crime and provide for the administration of justice; (b) Protect the right and control of private property; (c) Wage defensive war and provide for the nation's defense; (d) Compel each one who enjoys the protection of government to bear his fair share of the burden of performing the above functions.

5. I hold that the Constitution denies government the power to take from the individual either his life, liberty, or property except in accordance with moral law; that the same moral law which governs the actions of men when acting alone is also applicable when they act in concert with others; that no citizen or group of citizens has any right to direct their agent, the government to perform any act which would be evil or offensive to the conscience if the individual were performing the act himself outside the framework of government.

6. I am hereby resolved that under no circumstances shall the freedoms guaranteed by the Bill of Rights be infringed. In particular I am opposed to any attempt on the part of the Federal Government to deny the people their right to bear arms, to worship and pray when and where they choose, or to own and control private property.

7. I consider ourselves at war with international Communism which is committed to the destruction of our government, our right of property, and our freedom; that it is treason as defined by the Constitution to give aid and comfort to this implacable enemy.

8. I am unalterably opposed to Socialism, either in whole or in part, and regard it as an unconstitutional usurpation of power and a denial of the right of private property for government to own or operate the means of producing and distributing goods and services in competition with private enterprise, or to regiment owners in the legitimate use of private property.

9. I maintain that every person who enjoys the protection of his life, liberty, and property should bear his fair share of the cost of government in providing that protection; that the elementary principles of justice set forth in the Constitution demand that all taxes imposed be uniform and that each person's property or income be taxed at the same rate.

10. I believe in honest money, the gold and silver coinage of the Constitution, and a circulation medium convertible into such money without loss. I regard it as a flagrant violation of the explicit provisions of the Constitution for the Federal Government to make it a criminal offense to use gold or silver coin as legal tender or to use irredeemable paper money.

11. I believe that each State is sovereign in performing those functions reserved to it by the Constitution and it is destructive of our federal system and the right of self-government guaranteed under the Constitution for the Federal Government to regulate or control the States in performing their functions or to engage in performing such functions itself.

12. I consider it a violation of the Constitution for the Federal Government to levy taxes for the support of state or local government; that no State or local government can accept funds from the Federal and remain independent in performing its functions, nor can the citizens exercise their rights of self-government under such conditions.

13. I deem it a violation of the right of private property guaranteed under the Constitution for the Federal Government to forcibly deprive the citizens of this nation of their property through taxation or otherwise, and make a gift thereof to foreign governments or their citizens.

14. I believe that no treaty or agreement with other countries should deprive our citizens of rights guaranteed them by the Constitution.

15. I consider it a direct violation of the obligation imposed upon it by the Constitution for the Federal Government to dismantle or weaken our military establishment below that point required for the protection of the States against invasion, or to surrender or commit our men, arms, or money to the control of foreign one world organizations of governments.

These things I believe to be the proper role of government. We have strayed far afield. We must return to these basic concepts and principles – to these eternal verities. There is no other way. The storm signals are up. They are clear and ominous.

As Americans – citizens of the greatest nation under Heaven – we face difficult days. Never since the days of the Civil War has this choice nation faced such a crisis.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Proper Role of Government," Address given at BYU, 10/21/68](#)

[For] the alleged reason of helping the needy, the government began the distribution of doles, including the so-called old age pensions. If the dole system had been impartially and disinterestedly administered, if need for help had been made and kept the criterion of assistance, if politics had been kept out of the distribution of the dole, if its political advantages had not been immediately pushed, then its welfare angle might have had more appeal to the patriotic citizen.

But immediately the dole became a political tool; it was obviously used to gain political power; it came to be used to buy votes - not, so far as I know, as a five-dollar bill handed out on election day, but, and almost infinitely worse, a monthly payment over the year, and from one year to another. No one of us would see anyone suffer for food or clothing or shelter, without trying to help, but the extension of such help is no part of the function of our federal government. So long as this system is in operation, our free institutions and liberties are in real danger.

Has there been anything done about all this, except grumbling and growling? Has there been any concerted movement among the major taxpayers to place this burden back upon the states and the local communities, where it belongs, with the church taking the lead in supplying the wants of its own needy?

-J. Reuben Clark, [Church News](#), 9/25/49

The kingdom of God must be a continuing revolution against the norms of the society that fall below the standards that are set for us in the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the field of public life, it must be a continuing revolution against proposals that contradict the fundamental principles as laid down in the Constitution of the United States, which was written by men whom God raised up for this very purpose. If we remember that, we will be in the forefront of every battle against the things that are tearing down our society.

-Harold B. Lee, [Conference Report, October 1970, p. 110](#)

The constitutional provisions relating to government and religion were not intended to control the religious rights of people. Rather, they were intended to expand them and eliminate the fear of government intrusion. These provisions were meant to separate religion and government so that religion would be independent. The experiences of Roger Williams and other reformers provided the Founding Fathers of the U.S. with important facts to help them deal with the potential risks of a state religion corrupted by politics. Consequently, they drafted an article in the Bill of Rights to guarantee religious freedom from government as opposed to government freedom from religion.

In fact, the framers of the Constitution probably assumed that religious freedom would establish religion as a watchdog over government, and believed that free churches would inevitably stand and speak against immoral and corrupt legislation. All churches not only have the right to speak out on public moral issues, but they have the solemn obligation to do so. Religion represents society's conscience, and churches must speak out when government chooses a course that is contrary to the laws of God. To remove the influence of religion from public policy simply because some are uncomfortable with any degree of moral restraint is like the passenger on a sinking ship who removes his life jacket because it is restrictive and uncomfortable.

-M. Russell Ballard, ["Religion in a Free Society," Ensign, October 1992](#)

There is a great need for cooperation in the field of economics. Our citizens must themselves be educated to understand the systems under which they live and work. They must know enough to establish the proper education for themselves and their children and reach conclusions for themselves. I believe that it is neither wise nor safe to leave the determination of our educational systems and policies exclusively to the professional educators.

-Stephen L. Richards, [Conference Report, October 1939, p. 68](#)

Washington knew how to write a constitution. He also knew what it was necessary to have to make it survive. Earlier in Washington's Inaugural Address, his first, he said: "There exists in the economy and course of nature an indissoluble union between virtue and happiness. We ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smiles of heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right which heaven itself ordained." There then happened after his first inaugural something that doesn't happen in our time. The Senate replied to Washington's first inaugural saying: "We feel, Sir, and acknowledge the justness of your observations that the foundations of our national policy should be laid in private morality. If individuals be not influenced by moral principles, it is vain to look for public virtue."

As I close, may I presume to speak for all of us tonight as if to President Washington, on this July 4th night of 1993, and say to him: we feel, Sir, the force and acknowledge the justice of your observations about how the foundations of national policy are to be found in private morality. He knew the American people. He knew our beginnings. He knew our Constitution. We ignore his prescription at our peril.

-Neal A. Maxwell, [Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 7/4/93](#)

Unpopular minority religions are especially dependent upon a constitutional guarantee of free exercise of religion. We are fortunate to have such a guarantee in the United States, but many nations do not. The importance of that guarantee should make us ever diligent to defend it. And it is in need of being defended. During my lifetime I have seen a significant deterioration in the respect accorded to religion in our public life, and I believe that the vitality of religious freedom is in danger of being weakened accordingly...

A recent book illustrates this danger. In *Freedom From Religion*, published by the Oxford University Press, (the author) concludes: "[W]e must begin to consider the possibility that religious speech can no longer hide behind the shield of freedom of expression... Contemporary religious extremism leaves decision-makers and the public alike with no choice but to re-contour constitutionally granted rights as they pertain to religion and speech."

I hope that those who might be persuaded by these arguments will consider how easy it would be over time to manipulate the definition of "religious extremism" to suppress any unpopular religion.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Fundamentals of Our Constitution," Address given at Salt Lake City, UT, 9/17/10](#)

It is now two hundred years since the Constitution was written. Have we been wise beneficiaries of the gift entrusted to us? Have we valued and protected the principles laid down by this great document?

[We] must, with sadness, say that we have not been wise in keeping the trust of our Founding Fathers. For the past two centuries, those who do not prize freedom have chipped away at every major clause of our Constitution until today we face a crisis of great dimensions.

-President Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Constitution - A Heavenly Banner," Address given at BYU, 9/16/86](#)

A government of limited powers was the central premise of constitutional law during the first century and a half of our nation's history. Constitutional discussions of that period generally focused not on questions of individual rights but on whether the Constitution granted power to authorize the government activity that was challenged.

In the aftermath of the great depression and World War II, this traditional assumption of limited federal government powers was gradually displaced by the idea that the national government presumably possesses law-making powers except to the extent prohibited by some person's defined constitutional right. As a result of this change, current legal and political debate over excessive or undesirable government regulation tends to focus on whether some individual constitutional rights have been invaded.

In effect [this] shifts the burden of proof concerning the appropriateness of an exercise of government power from the state to the right-holder. New assertions of government power are no longer suspect. Where no constitutional right is clearly available as a shield, new assertions of government authority meet passive acquiescence.

...[We] need to revitalize the old wisdom that the protection of individual freedom often requires limiting government powers in ways that go beyond merely vindicating individual rights. We must cage the lion as well as arm the spectators.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Some Responsibilities of Citizenship," Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 7/3/94](#)

Without some government stability against an outraged majority, government could not protect minority rights. As President Clark declared: "The Constitution was framed in order to protect minorities. That is the purpose of written constitutions. In order that the minorities might be protected in the matter of amendments under our Constitution, the Lord required that the amendments should be made only through the operation of very large majorities—two-thirds for action in the Senate, and three-fourths as among the states. This is the inspired, prescribed order." (Selected Papers on Religion, Education and Youth, p. 165)

The delegates to the Constitutional Convention achieved the required balance between popular sovereignty and stability through a power of amendment that was ultimately available but deliberately slow. Only in this way could the government have the certainty of stability, the protection of minority rights, and the potential of change, all at the same time.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["The Divinely Inspired Constitution," Ensign, February 1992](#)

Let me give you a crucial key to help you avoid being deceived. It is this: Learn to keep your eye on the prophet. He is the Lord's mouthpiece and the only man who can speak for the Lord today. Let his inspired counsel take precedence. Let his inspired words be a basis for evaluating the counsel of all lesser authorities. Then live close to the Spirit so you may know the truth of all things.

All men are entitled to inspiration, but only one man is the Lord's mouthpiece. Some lesser men have in the past and will in the future use their offices unrighteously. Some will, ignorantly or otherwise, use it to promote false counsel. Some will use it to lead the unwary astray and some will use it to persuade us that all is well in Zion. And some will use it to cover and excuse their ignorance. Keep your eye on the prophet, for the Lord will never permit his prophet to lead this church astray.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

Education for citizenship requires more emphasis upon the advantages and blessings of the American Way of Life. Next to life itself freedom is man's most cherished possession...

Communism is antagonistic to the American way of life. Its avowed purpose is to destroy belief in God and free enterprise. In education for citizenship, therefore, why should we not see to it that every child in America is taught the superiority of our way of life, of our Constitution and the sacredness of the

freedom of the individual. Such definite instruction is not in violation of either the federal or the state constitution.

Teach that free enterprise is the right to open a gas station or a grocery store, or to buy a farm if you want to be your own boss, or to change your job if you do not like the man for whom you work. Under Communism you work where you are told, and you live and die bossed by hard-fisted bureaucrats who tell you every move you dare make. Free enterprise is the right to lock your door at night. In Communist countries the dread secret police can break it down any time they like.

-President David O. McKay, [Church News](#), 3/13/54

Let us not be lulled away into a false security. Let us not become misguided dupes of which there are many throughout the free world...

It is my conviction that the paramount issue today is liberty against creeping socialism. Collectivized socialism is part of the Communist strategy. Communist dupes and left-wingers use every stratagem to make socialism sound appealing and seem inevitable. Their aims for the U.S. include greatly expanded wasteful spending, higher and higher taxes, increasingly unbalanced budgets, wild inflation followed by government controls over our economy and lives, greater centralization of power in Washington and so on ad infinitum. We will never win our fight against communism by making concessions to socialism.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Church News](#), 9/2/61

Freedom and light have never been easy to attain or maintain. Since the War in Heaven, the forces of evil have used every means possible to destroy agency and extinguish light. The assault on moral principles and religious freedom has never been stronger.

As Latter-day Saints, we need to do our best to preserve light and protect our families and communities from this assault on morality and religious freedom.

-Quentin L. Cook, ["Let There Be Light!" Ensign, November 2010](#)

Religious leaders and believers must unite to strengthen our freedom to teach what we have in common, as well as to teach and exercise our very real religious differences. We must walk shoulder to shoulder on the same path in order to secure our freedom to pursue our separate ways when that is necessary according to our distinctive beliefs. We must also insist on our constitutional right to exercise our beliefs and to voice our consciences on issues in the public square and in the halls of justice. These are the rights of all citizens, including religious believers, leaders, and organizations.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Strengthening the Free Exercise of Religion," Address given on 5/16/13](#)

Brigham Young said: "When the day comes in which the Kingdom of God will bear rule, the flag of the United States will proudly flutter unsullied on the flag staff of liberty and equal rights, without a spot to

sully its fair surface; the glorious flag our fathers have bequeathed to us will then be unfurled to the breeze by those who have power to hoist it aloft and defend its sanctity."

So America will not fall. It will have to go through a cleansing, however, so that wickedness may be abolished. But the nation as such will not fall.

Said President Harold B. Lee: "The Constitution will stand even if it must be saved by the elders of this Church. This nation, founded on the principles laid down by men whom God raised up, will never fail. I have faith in America, and you and I must have faith in America if we understand the teachings of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ."

-Mark E. Petersen, ["America - World Leader," Address given at BYU, 7/4/76](#)

Yes, we have a rich heritage, but may I remind you that nations oft times sow the seeds of their own destruction even while enjoying unprecedented prosperity, even before reaching the zenith or the peak of their power. I think history clearly indicates that this is often the case. When it appears that all is well, oft times the very seeds of destruction are sown, sometimes unwittingly. Most of the great civilizations of the world have not been conquered from without until they have destroyed themselves from within by sowing these seeds of destruction.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["This Nation Shall Endure," Address given at BYU, 12/4/73](#)

Why does religious freedom seem to be weakening? The increasing domain of government is surely one reason. As citizens look to government for more and more and to private initiative for less and less, the unregulated room for religious activity is reduced and the likelihood of government regulation of religious activities increases. Private organizations that pursue actions seen as a challenge to government policies or programs can be made targets for laws or regulations.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Religious Freedom in a Pluralistic Society," Claremont Graduate University, 3/25/16](#)

President McKay has said that he would not deal with a nation that treats another as Russia has treated America. Yet the tragedy is that one of the major reasons for the rapid growth of communism is because of the help, yes the increasing help, which they are receiving from right within our own government.

Today our boys are dying in a war with the communists, a war which our government has not declared, the largest undeclared war in the history of the world. And one which it would appear our government has no intention of winning. Yet, our government encourages us to buy communist goods and our government continues to give aid to the enemy. This is treason, as defined by the Constitution.

It could easily be that one of the reasons this undeclared war in Vietnam is purposefully being prolonged is to provide the excuse to further weaken our economy and to institute more socialistic controls over our people. Of course, within the next few days there may be some dramatic moves made in order to placate and deceive the electorate, as there was during the so-called Cuban Missile Crisis. But do not be misled.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

Over 200 years have passed since the twin miracles of writing and ratifying the Constitution. Surely, ladies and gentlemen, America has not come thus far only to squander our precious liberties in license, or our economic strengths in national indulgence.

In a real way, each generation of Americans has its chance to re-ratify the Constitution. We can do this by abiding by its principles and leaving our own legacy to posterity; likewise, by both preserving our constitutional rights, but also fulfilling our responsibilities. Otherwise, expressions of patriotism are no more than verbal veneration without actual emulation.

Re-ratification will require statesmanship among both the people and the leaders. Statesmanship differs from politics in that it does not treat symptoms but strives to cure the underlying diseases. Our Founding Fathers did statesman-like work in 1776 and again in 1787. In our time, again regardless of party, we seem preoccupied with treating symptoms – quick fixes – and with getting by a little longer.

-Neal A. Maxwell, [Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 7/4/93](#)

I pray that we will refrain from doing anything further that will jeopardize in any manner our priceless heritage. This is a choice land. If we live and work so as to enjoy the approbation of a Divine Providence, we cannot fail. Without that help, without adhering to these basic concepts, we cannot long endure.

As true Americans, let us put our courage to the test, to be firm in our conviction that our cause is just, to reaffirm our faith in all things for which true Americans have always stood.

Let all Americans arouse themselves and stay aroused. We must not make any further concessions to socialistic communism at home or abroad. We do not need to. We should oppose these evil forces from our position of strength, for we are not weak.

There is much work to be done. The time is short. Let us begin – in earnest – now and may God bless our efforts, I humbly pray.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Proper Role of Government," Address given at BYU, 10/21/68](#)

Today, the buzz words family values are being incorporated in almost every politician's thirty-second sound bite. But what does that phrase really mean? Whose values are we going to embrace: the values of politicians? The values the media tell us we should cherish? The values of special interest groups and organizations? The values of rank-and-file Americans, as determined by scientific survey?

Obviously, it would not be politically expedient to say that the values that the Founding Fathers drew upon are eternal, unchanging values. But that is a fact. The values that made America great are, in reality, the commandments of God. They provide the foundation upon which the American republic was built. And if American democracy seems shaky today, it's only because that foundation has been eroded and weakened under the guise of separation of church and state.

-M. Russell Ballard, ["Religion in a Free Society," Ensign, October 1992](#)

There can be no doubt of the sickness in our society today. We cannot build prisons fast enough to accommodate the need. Humanism has replaced worship in the lives of so very many. We are forsaking the Almighty and I fear He is forsaking us. We are closing the door against the God, whose sons and daughters we are. We sing, "My country tis of thee, sweet land of liberty." We need to sing again and again the fourth verse of that hymn:

*Our Father's God to Thee, Author of liberty, To Thee we sing
Long may our land be bright, with freedom's holy light,
Protect us by thy might, Great God our king!*

-President Gordon B. Hinckley, [Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 1997](#)

Our whole republic rests upon the notion of "obedience to the unenforceable," upon a tremendous emphasis on inner controls through self-discipline. The historians Will and Ariel Durant observed that "if liberty destroys order, the hunger for order will destroy liberty." But keeping liberty and order in tension balance requires tremendous self-discipline in the citizenry of a nation.

Can we really afford the ultimate costs of governments which, in lieu of self-discipline, impose more and more outer controls?

-Neal A. Maxwell, ["The Prohibitive Costs of a Value-Free Society," Ensign, October 1978](#)

Speaking of public schools, the government has the right to say to every one of its teachers that your purpose is to teach those children to be loyal citizens, to be honest in their dealings with their fellow men...

In other words... the whole purpose of education is to train the child in uprightness. Train him to live as a social being and to be a contributive influence for progress in our republican form of government.

-President David O. McKay, [Church News](#), 9/26/53

The Lord has declared that before the second coming of Christ it will be necessary to "... destroy the secret works of darkness, ..." in order to preserve the land of Zion - the Americas (2 Nephi 10: 11-16).

The worldwide secret conspiracy which has risen up in our day to fulfil these prophecies is easily identified. President McKay has left no room for doubt as to what attitude Latter-day Saints should take toward the modern "secret combinations" of conspiratorial communism. In a lengthy statement on communism, he said: "...Latter-day Saints should have nothing to do with the secret combinations and groups antagonistic to the constitutional law of the land, which the Lord 'suffered to be established,' and

which 'should be maintained for the rights and protection of all flesh according to just and holy principles.'"

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1961, p. 72](#)

Are there not, in reality, underlying, universal principles with reference to which all issues must be resolved whether the society be simple or complex in its mechanical organization? It seems to me we could relieve ourselves of most of the bewilderment which so unsettles and distracts us by subjecting each situation to the simple test of right and wrong. Right and wrong as moral principles do not change. They are applicable and reliable determinants whether the situations with which we deal are simple or complicated. There is always a right and a wrong to every question which requires our solution.

-Albert E. Bowen, [Conference Report, October 1944, p. 153](#)

We must make our influence felt by our vote, our letters, and our advice. We must be wisely informed and let others know how we feel. We must take part in local precinct meetings and select delegates who will truly represent our feelings.

-President Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Constitution - A Heavenly Banner," Address given at BYU, 9/16/86](#)

Today I would like to propose four questions which every Latter-day Saint might well ask as he attempts to appraise any program, policy, or idea promoted by any would-be political leader...

First, is the proposal, the policy, or the idea being promoted right as measured by the gospel of Jesus Christ? I assure you it is much easier for one to measure a proposed policy by the gospel of Jesus Christ if he has accepted the gospel and is living it.

Secondly, is it right as measured by the Constitution of this land and the glorious principles embodied in that Constitution? Now that suggests that we must read and study the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, and the Bill of Rights, that we might know what principles are embodied therein.

Thirdly, we might well ask the question: Is it right as measured by the counsel of the living oracles of God? It is my conviction, my brethren and sisters, that these living oracles are not only authorized, but are obligated to give counsel to this people on any subject which is vital to the welfare of this people and the upbuilding of the kingdom of God...

Fourthly, what will be the effect of the morale and the character of the people if this or that policy is adopted? After all, as a Church we are interested in building men and women, building character, because character is the one thing we make in this world and take with us into the next. It must never be sacrificed for expediency.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1954, pp. 121-2](#)

It may well be, as our time comes to “suffer shame for his name” (Acts 5:41), that some of this special stress will grow out of that portion of discipleship which involves citizenship. Remember that, as Nephi and Jacob said, we must learn to endure “the crosses of the world” (2 Nephi 9:18) and yet to despise “the shame of [it]” (Jacob 1:8). To go on clinging to the iron rod in spite of the mockery and scorn that flow at us from the multitudes in that great and spacious building seen by Father Lehi, which is the “pride of the world,” is to disregard the shame of the world (1 Nephi 8:26-27, 33; 11:35-36). Parenthetically, why – really why – do the disbelievers who line that spacious building watch so intently what the believers are doing? Surely there must be other things for the scornors to do – unless, deep within their seeming disinterest, there is interest.

If the challenge of the secular church becomes very real, let us, as in all other human relationships, be principled but pleasant. Let us be perceptive without being pompous. Let us have integrity and not write checks with our tongues which our conduct cannot cash.

-Neal A. Maxwell, [“Meeting the Challenges of Today,” Address given at BYU, 10/10/78](#)

In April 1962, President David O. McKay, in his closing remarks at General Conference, quoted J. Edgar Hoover as follows ([p. 125 CR](#)): *“There is no place here in America for part-time patriots. This nation is face to face with the greatest danger ever to confront it, a sinister and deadly conspiracy which can be conquered only by an alert, informed citizenry. It is indeed appalling that some members of our society continue to deplore and criticize those who stress the communist danger. Public indifference to this threat is tantamount to national suicide. Lethargy leads only to disaster.”*

...The Communist method of confusing the issues is to use pseudo-idealistic and pseudo-moral words and phrases in order to trap the unwary into following their designs. The fisherman knows that he cannot entice a fish to bite upon a raw, steel hook, so he dresses it up with a nice, juicy worm and the poor fish bites. In the same manner, the pseudo-moral and pseudo-idealistic expressions trap many innocents so that they will follow out the aims of the Communist conspirators, for example, the false appeals made by the Communists in the name of “peace” and the “brotherhood of man.” They know full well that Communism has nothing in common with these expressions as we understand them. Yet, they deliberately misuse them in order to deceive. And they are effective.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [“A Race Against Time,” Address given at BYU, 12/10/64](#)

As American citizens, we must reestablish true loyalty to our country and to the divine principles that made it great. As members of the Church, we must rededicate ourselves to the principles of the gospel and the great cause for which the Lord in the first place created the United States.

I have in my hand here the oath that the new citizens of the United States take. The oath says this: *“I hereby declare on oath that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty of whom or of which I heretofore have been a subject or citizen, that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies.”*

As I read this over each time, I wonder why we expect more of immigrants coming into America than we expect of ourselves? If we are going to require them to take an oath of allegiance to the United States

that they will sustain the Constitution and that they will defend it against all enemies of every description why do we not take that same oath to ourselves?

-Mark E. Petersen, ["America - World Leader," Address given at BYU, 7/4/76](#)

Today ... men are not building for durability either in their structures, their lives, their religious faiths, or their institutions. The result is a troubled world. Everywhere is anxiety and dread arising from uncertainty which halts or stays all the normal processes of life. It all arises out of one cause - lack of fidelity to right principles - principles which are known and are not mysteriously hidden. Men have failed in allegiance to their religious principles and nations have not been true to their political principles. The two infidelities go together.

When there is a breakdown of religious constancy, there inescapably follows deterioration in the political morality. Both have the same root cause, namely, the breaking away from or the compromising of sound principles. It amounts to a running away from reality and giving way to the urge for avoiding the hard and rigorous disciplines incident to meeting the issues of life, trying to reach goals without traveling the thorny roads that lead to them.

-Albert E. Bowen, [Conference Report, October 1948, p. 87](#)

Believers should remember that there are two different systems of law: divine and civil. While believers revere divine law, they should also acknowledge that civil law is also ordained of God. The Lord Jesus Christ directed, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21). So taught, we must, to the extent possible, obey *both* systems of law. When there are apparent conflicts, we must seek to harmonize them. When the two prove to be truly irreconcilable, we should join with others of like mind in striving to change the civil law to accommodate the divine. In all events, we must be very measured before ever deciding – in the rarest of circumstances – to disregard one because we feel compelled by the other.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Religious Freedom in a Pluralistic Society," Claremont Graduate University, 3/25/16](#)

According to Marxist doctrine, a human being is primarily an economic creature. His material well-being is all important; his privacy and his freedom are secondary. The Soviet constitution reflects this philosophy in its emphasis on security: food, clothing, housing, medical care – the same things that might be considered in a jail. The basic concept is that the government has full responsibility for the welfare of the people and, in order to discharge that responsibility, must assume control of all its activities. It is significant that in actuality the Russian people have few of the rights supposedly "guaranteed" to them in their constitution, while the American people have them in abundance even though they are not guaranteed. The reason is that material gain and economic security simply cannot be guaranteed by any government. They are the result and reward of hard work and industrious production. Unless the people bake one loaf of bread for each citizen, the government cannot guarantee that each will have one loaf to eat. Constitutions can be written, laws can be passed and imperial decrees can be issued, but unless the bread is produced, it can never be distributed.

Why, then, do Americans bake more bread, manufacture more shoes and assemble more TV sets than Russians do? They do so precisely because our government does NOT guarantee these things. If it did, there would be so many accompanying taxes, controls, regulations and political manipulations that the productive genius that is America's would soon be reduced to the floundering level of waste and inefficiency now found behind the Iron Curtain. And I've seen it with my own eyes in many countries.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Proper Role of Government," Address given at BYU, 10/21/68](#)

Yes, our inspired Constitution has a marvelous system of checks and balances, but if uninspired individuals lack their own checks and balances, the inspired Constitution cannot correct that imbalance. More remedies for our nation's ills are to be found in individual restraint than in restraining orders. More remedies are to be found inside our souls than in our courts; or in families than in legislative bodies. There is more need for neighborly affection than there is for litigation in resolving local disputes. Yes, courts can adjudicate between citizens, but courts cannot supply one citizen with esteem for his fellow citizens.

Washington, in his Farewell Address counseled: "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, the firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician equally with the pious man ought to respect and cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity."

-Neal A. Maxwell, [Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 7/4/93](#)

In view of current experience and culture, how should religious persons and their organizations whose positions are dictated or affected by religious beliefs lobby or otherwise enter the debate on public issues? They should not be required to forego or deny their religious or other beliefs or motivations, but they should be counseled to be prudent. They will usually be most persuasive in political discourse by framing arguments and explaining the value of their positions in terms understandable to and subject to debate with those who do not share their beliefs. All sides should seek to contribute to the reasoned discussion and compromise that are essential in a pluralistic society.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Religious Freedom in a Pluralistic Society," Claremont Graduate University, 3/25/16](#)

There is one thing more I wish to speak about, and that is political economy. It is our duty to concentrate all our influence to make popular that which is sound and good, and unpopular that which is unsound. 'Tis right, politically, for a man who has influence to use it, as well as for a man who has no influence to use his. From henceforth I will maintain all the influence I can get.

-Prophet Joseph Smith, 1843, [The Documentary History of the Church](#), 5:286

We must become involved in civic affairs. As citizens of this republic, we cannot do our duty and be idle spectators. It is vital that we follow this counsel from the Lord: "Honest men and wise men should be

sought for diligently, and good men and wise men ye should observe to uphold; otherwise, whatsoever is less than these cometh of evil" (D&C 98:10).

Note the qualities that the Lord demands in those who are to represent us. They must be good, wise, and honest. We must be concerted in our desires and efforts to see men and women represent us who possess all three of these qualities.

-President Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Constitution - A Heavenly Banner," Address given at BYU, 9/16/86](#)

If the idea of checks and balances is to work properly, each branch of government must preserve its independence from the others. Moreover, the powers of each of these three branches must be exercised in a good faith effort to serve the interests of the public, rather than to dominate the others or to enhance the personal position of a particular official. Politics, revenge or personal gain must never be the primary driving force in the application of checks and balances.

For checks and balances to work properly, and for the fundamental principle of separation of powers to be honored and perform its proper function, each branch of government must fulfill its duties fully, and each must refrain from attempting to exercise the functions of the others. For example, Congress should perform its duty of making the laws and specifying the principles—even politically difficult principles—and not dodge this responsibility by delegating this function to regulations made by the executive branch. The courts must limit themselves to interpreting the Constitution and the laws and not stray into the legislative function of law-making. In contrast, we are all aware that in our day the actions of courts on major issues of public policy receive great attention in the media and are frequently represented and understood as the actions of those who make laws rather than those who merely interpret them.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Fundamentals of Our Constitution," Address given at Salt Lake City, 9/17/10](#)

We want to avoid all the disagreeable things. We are trying to live under a pleasure economy in a pleasure world. So we live, really, in nothing: for no God, no piety towards the past, for no pride of race or personality. Once we lived for freedom, pledging "our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor." The very expression implies sacrifice and suffering, discipline of the soul to meet reality. Now we want to be spared suffering of any kind - physical, emotional, or mental. We seek security, a six-hour day, a car, and a pension. But all the time life eludes us, peace of mind eludes us, and we have dissatisfaction, turmoil, uncertainty, and dread.

-Albert E. Bowen, [Conference Report, October 1948, p. 87](#)

Dishonesty destroys character. The Lord has no place for dishonesty in his kingdom. Dishonest persons who pose as religious people are hypocrites, and no one has received the condemnation of the Lord in quite the degree in which he heaps it upon the hypocrites of his day. If we are to preserve America, we must restore good character and wipe out dishonesty in all its forms. Dishonesty is weakness, crime is weakness, immorality is weakness, but America must be strong.

-Mark E. Petersen, ["America - World Leader," Address given at BYU, 7/4/76](#)

I have talked face to face with the godless, communist leaders. It may surprise you to learn that I was host to Mr. Khrushchev for a half day when he visited the United States, not that I'm proud of it. I opposed his coming then and I still feel it was a mistake to welcome this atheistic murderer as a state visitor. But according to President Eisenhower, Khrushchev had expressed a desire to learn something of American agriculture. And after seeing Russian agriculture I can understand why.

As we talked face-to-face, he indicated that my grandchildren would live under communism. After assuring him that I expected to do all in my power to assure that his and all other grandchildren will live under freedom, he arrogantly declared in substance, "You Americans are so gullible. No, you won't accept communism outright. But we'll keep feeding you small doses of socialism until you finally wake up and find you already have communism. We won't have to fight you. We'll so weaken your economy until you fall like overripe fruit into our hands."

And they're ahead of schedule in their devilish scheme.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

Governments are the *servants*, not the *masters* of the people. All who love the Constitution of the United States can vow with Thomas Jefferson, who, when he was president, said, "*I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man.*"

He later said: "*To preserve our independence, we must not let our rulers load us with perpetual debt. We must take our choice between economy and liberty, or profusion and servitude. If we run into such debts, we must be taxed in our meat and drink, in our necessities and in our comforts, in our labors and in our amusements.*"

-David O. McKay, [Conference Report, April 1950, p. 35](#)

I have always felt that the United States Constitution's closest approach to scriptural stature is in the phrasing of our Bill of Rights. Without the free exercise of religion, America could not have served as the host nation for the restoration of the gospel, which began just three decades after the Bill of Rights was ratified.

I also see scriptural stature in the concept and wording of the freedoms of speech and press, the right to be secure against unreasonable searches and seizures, the requirements that there must be probable cause for an arrest and that accused persons must have a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury, and the guarantee that a person will not be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["The Divinely Inspired Constitution," Ensign, February 1992](#)

Samuel Adams, who is sometimes called the father of the American Revolution, wrote: "I thank God that I have lived to see my country independent and free. She may long enjoy her independence and freedom if she will. It depends upon her virtue."

That means it depends on us. If we would maintain the independence and freedom the Founding Fathers intended, we must work to preserve and protect the moral foundation upon which they built the U. S. government. We must stand boldly for righteousness and truth, and must defend the cause of honor, decency, and personal freedom espoused by Washington, Madison, Adams, Lincoln, and other leaders who acknowledged and loved God. Otherwise, we will find ourselves in the same predicament President Lincoln observed in 1863.

Said Lincoln: "We have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of their own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us!"

-M. Russell Ballard, ["Religion in a Free Society," Ensign, October 1992](#)

It is my conviction that God does now look with favor, and has looked with favor, upon this government, which he established by wise men. It is also my firm conviction that his protective hand is still over the United States of America.

I know, too, that if we will keep the commandments of God—live as he has directed, and does now direct, through his prophets—we will continue to have his protecting hand over us. But we must be true to the eternal verities, the great Christian virtues which God has revealed. Then, and only then, will we be safe as a nation and as individuals. God grant that the faithfulness of the Latter-day Saints will provide the balance of power to save this nation in times of crisis.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["This Nation Shall Endure," Address given at BYU, 12/4/73](#)

The kinds of persons who are idolized in our current society, including sports figures and movie or rock stars, are substitutes for heroes, but they are not heroes. The current idols stand for a self-serving pursuit of happiness, not an unselfish sacrifice for goodness. A materialistic or self-serving world cannot produce heroes because such a world has no generally accepted measure to tell us what we should do in the service of others. The genuine hero achieves that status by accomplishments measured against a consensus of what is good and praiseworthy. We cannot have heroes without clear, common ideas of what is good or right.

As noted earlier, the last half-century of legal and public discourse has concentrated strongly on the language of rights. I suggest that there are few heroes in a world that focuses on rights. Is a person a hero for getting his or her rights? There is justice in that accomplishment, but its only service is self-service... No, the pursuit of rights is rarely the stuff of which heroes are made. And so, in a time of preoccupation with rights it should not surprise us that we live in a world with few heroes.

Heroes win that status by distinction in the fulfillment of responsibilities. If we could resurrect the prominence of responsibilities in our society, we would resurrect the framework of belief and the measures of distinction by which heroes can be recognized and honored.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Some Responsibilities of Citizenship," Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 7/3/94](#)

I believe we are paying a very high price for our increasing secularism. Jefferson said, "God who gave us life, gave us liberty." Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are a gift of God?

-President Gordon B. Hinckley, [Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 1997](#)

We have been plunging headlong down the primrose path toward the inevitable destruction of our great country...

There are real dangers ahead. Why do I have anxiety and fear for the future?

I fear for the future when I realize that for some thirty years our once-free institutions, political, economic, educational and social, have been drifting into the hands of those who favor the Welfare State, and who would "centralize all power in the hands of the political apparatus in Washington." This enhancement of political power at the expense of individual rights, so often disguised as 'democracy' or 'freedom' or 'civil rights,' is socialism, no matter what name tag it bears.

I fear for the future when the federal government now owns more than one-third of the total land area within the boundaries of the fifty states.

I fear for the future when the central government owns and operates more than 3,000 businesses and commercial activities in competition with its own private tax-paying citizens.

I fear for the future when I realize that the functions of the federal government are carried on by some 2,000 major operating units.

I fear for the future when the federal government directly lends \$1 for every \$5 loaned by private banks and that much of the federal funds loaned are at rates below the cost of the money to the government.

I fear for the future when foreign governments have used and are using American tax money to pay for socialism.

I fear for the future when I see an affluent but complacent citizenry paying little or no attention to these and many other socialistic trends in this blessed land of America.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["A Race Against Time," Address given at BYU, 12/10/64](#)

I am sure, too, that the people of the United States will, through work, create wealth and in that creation give employment and happiness, if only the natural laws upon which free enterprise has been established are allowed to freely operate. But wealth cannot be created in sufficient amount to go around and bring prosperity to all the people if those laws are seriously contravened by any group in our society - capital, labor, or government.

Nothing but work can create wealth in this day and age - productive work of the laborer. Other manipulations may seem to do it but they do not create real wealth that feeds and clothes and houses and makes happy people. The government cannot do it because in final analysis it is not possessed of

the elemental necessities for the creation of wealth. Of itself it has no capital and it has no labor. All that it can do is take from one and give to another. It takes by taxation, its only ultimate source of revenue; and it gives in wages, subsidies, bounties, and many other ways, but it does not create wealth and the creation of wealth lies at the basis of prosperity.

-Stephen L. Richards, [Conference Report, October 1939, p. 70](#)

A more recent historian, Barbara Tuchman, called our Founding Fathers “the most remarkable generation of public men in the history of the United States, or perhaps of any other nation.” She said it would be invaluable if we could know what produced this burst of talent from a base of only 2.5 million inhabitants. Some of us here tonight believe there was divine design associated with that “burst of talent,” involving wise men whom God raised up to this very purpose.

One of these, Washington, found his biographer, Flexner, writing of him these words: “In all history, few men who possessed unassailable power have used that power so gently and self-effacingly for what their best instincts told them was the welfare of their neighbors and all mankind.”

As one thinks about Washington and power, it reminds us that power is most safe with those like Washington, who are not in love with power.

-Neal A. Maxwell, [Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 7/4/93](#)

I stood in Czechoslovakia in 1946 and witnessed the ebbing away of freedom resulting in the total loss of liberty to a wonderful people. I visited among the liberty-loving Polish people and talked with their leaders as the insidious freedom-destroying conspiracy moved in, imposing the chains of bondage on a Christian nation.

In both of these freedom-loving nations were members of the church, striving as we all do to live the gospel. But did they stop the communists? Although their numbers were relatively few, the danger to freedom seemed to be far away. And now there are no doubt Mormons in communist slave labor camps.

But here in America, the Lord’s base of operations, so designated by the Lord himself, through His holy prophets, we of the priesthood, members of His restored church, might well provide the balance of power to save our freedom. Indeed we might if we go forward as General Moroni of old, and raise the Standard of Liberty throughout the land.

My brethren, we can do the job that must be done. We can, as a priesthood, provide the balance of power to preserve our freedom and save this nation from bondage.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

By a careful perusal of the scriptures, we find that God in ancient days had as much to do with governments, kings and kingdoms, as he ever had to do with religion...

Certainly, if any person ought to interfere in political matters, it should be those whose minds and judgments are influenced by correct principles - religious as well as political - otherwise those persons professing religion would have to be governed by those who make no profession; be subject to their rule, have the law and word of God trampled underfoot, and become as wicked as Sodom, and as corrupt as Gomorrah, and be prepared for final destruction. We are told, "When the wicked rule the people mourn."

-John Taylor, 1844, [The Millennial Star, 5:9](#)

In the olden days, political parties had definite creeds to which they adhered with more or less tenacity. There was a rather definite cleavage between the parties. They prided themselves on their "principles." What is the situation today? To one far away it looks as if only party names persisted - it is very difficult to discover any resemblance in substance between a party platform of today and then. The idea that it is better to "be right than president" seems to have gone completely into the discard. Then a politician was an individual who adhered to the "principles" of his party and sought valiantly to make them prevail; now he appears to be a person willing to advocate any popular doctrine as a means of getting into office and, once there, to take any stand on public questions that he thinks will keep him there.

So it happens that office holders, bearing the same party name, are often as far apart in their views as political poles can possibly be. They "stand by the president" in the campaign but when in office often throw him over-board and steer an independent course. Where is their adherence to principle, consistency in conduct, and stability in position with the average politician in America today? Recently a young man asked what I thought of politics as a career. My answer was that present trends in America being as they are, if he would rather "be right than president," he would likely not get far in politics.

-Joseph F. Merrill, 1936, [The Improvement Era, 39:342](#)

Now we must take upon ourselves our spiritual armor and with the shield of good character fight valiantly against the powers of evil that threaten us. We must fight the good fight. We must finish our course. We must keep the faith.

We must never shrink from this great responsibility. The enemy is all about us. If we can only sense the dangers that confront us, without hesitation we will pledge to this great purpose our lives, our property, and our sacred honor. "So conquer we must, when our cause it is just, and this be our motto: 'In God is our trust!'"

When we win this conflict, we may then justly sing: "Blest with victory and peace, may the heaven-rescued land praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation!"

-Mark E. Petersen, ["America - World Leader," Address given at BYU, 7/4/76](#)

The principle behind (the) American philosophy can be reduced to a rather simple formula, and one that we should never forget:

1. Economic security for all is impossible without widespread abundance.
2. Abundance is impossible without industrious and efficient production.

3. Such production is impossible without energetic, willing & eager labor.
4. This is not possible without incentive.
5. Of all forms of incentive – the freedom to attain a reward for one's labors is the most sustaining for most people. Sometimes called THE PROFIT MOTIVE, it is simply the right to plan and to earn and to enjoy the fruits of your labor.
6. This profit motive DIMINISHES as government controls, regulations and taxes INCREASE to deny the fruits of success to those who produce. Any attempt THROUGH GOVERNMENTAL INTERVENTION to redistribute the material rewards of labor can only result in the eventual destruction of the productive base of society, without which real abundance and security for more than the ruling elite is quite impossible.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Proper Role of Government," Address given at BYU, 10/21/68](#)

There is no success without solvency - personal and national solvency. I cannot become accustomed to the idea of perpetual and increasing debt. I know the philosophy that would explain it away. I know that it is said that we shouldn't worry about it because after all we only owe it to ourselves. But we may also soon be owing it to our grandchildren, and I already owe so much to my grandfather that I don't want to be in debt to my grandson as well! Solvency is part of success.

-Richard L. Evans, [Church News](#), 6/11/55

In politics as in everything else we want to know the will of God, and then do it... Do we not believe in the voice of the people? Yes; but we believe in the voice of God first, in the middle, and in the end... We do not think we have wisdom to manage our political affairs without the interposition of the Most High... I very much doubt the right of men to do as they please when they profess to be Latter-day Saints; because we have covenanted together to keep the commandments of God and obey the holy priesthood.

-John Taylor, 1867, [Journal of Discourses, 11:355-6](#)

The drift toward centralization of power is *not* inevitable. It can be slowed down, halted, reversed. The thought that the federal government is wealthy and the states poverty-stricken is a dangerous illusion...

It is difficult for the states to make a strong case for assistance from the federal government when anything the federal government spends must come from the states. There are no resources of consequence in the United States - no income of wealth which is not located within the borders of the states and subject to their taxing powers.

The states not only have rights, they have responsibilities and they have opportunities.

In the last analysis, we are not trying to protect one government entity from another. We are trying to protect the rights of individual people. If we ever forget this, the whole process of government is pointless.

-Ezra Taft Benson, 1957, [The Improvement Era, 60:350](#)

How I have looked at the meandering paths of politicians! See one man spend a thousand dollars to get a small office. Another ten thousand, another a hundred thousand. Intriguing and planning here and there. What for? To deceive somebody or other! Why not tell the truth right out? Would it not be easier? It would. Politicians would not be under the necessity of using so many arguments to make their hearers and constituents believe that they are the very men wanted, and that their opponents are the very men not wanted.

-President Brigham Young, 1870, [Journal of Discourses, 14:76-7](#)

Let us have this clearly in mind: Since the United States was created by act of God to provide a suitable place in which the gospel could be restored and then be sent abroad to the nations of the earth, the Almighty will preserve our country for that purpose. But he will not preserve it in wickedness. Evil must be swept away, and he gives us ample warning to repent. He told the brother of Jared that this land had been “preserved for a righteous people” and declared that “whoso should possess this land of promise, from that time henceforth and forever, should serve him, the true and only God, or they should be swept off” (Ether 2:7, 8).

Then he said, “This cometh unto you, O ye Gentiles [that means us who live here today], that ye may know the decrees of God—that ye may repent, and not continue in your iniquities until the fullness come, that ye may not bring down the fullness of the wrath of God upon you as the inhabitants of the land have hitherto done” (Ether 2:11).

So out of his love for America, and out of his desire to have the United States fulfill his divine destiny, God asks us to repent and keep his commandments and thus save our heritage here. Others may sin and go down to destruction, but we who hold his priesthood, we to whom he has committed the stewardship of his latter-day work, we must never fail. We must never bow down to sin.

-Mark E. Petersen, ["America - World Leader," Address given at BYU, 7/4/76](#)

The prophet Joseph Smith is reported to have prophesied the role the priesthood might play to save our inspired constitution. Now is the time to move forward courageously, to become alerted, informed and active. We are not just ordinary men; we bear the priesthood and authority of God. We understand the world and God’s divine purpose as no other man.

The gospel and its preaching can prosper only in an atmosphere of freedom. And now in this critical period, when many pulpits are being turned into pipelines of collectivist propaganda, preaching the social gospel and denying basic principles of salvation, is the time for action.

We know as do no other people that the constitution of the United States is inspired, established by men whom the Lord raised up for that very purpose. We cannot, we must not, shrink our sacred responsibility to rise up in defense of our God-given freedom.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

Then there is the matter of voting. I have been alarmed at the steady decline of voter turnout in many parts of the United States, including Utah. Voting is a fundamental right and responsibility that must not be taken for granted. Political participation can be inconvenient. It requires sacrifices of time and resources, but it is essential to our democratic society. Without substantial voter turnout, the people abrogate the great fundamental of popular sovereignty.

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Fundamentals of Our Constitution," Address given at Salt Lake City, UT, 9/17/10](#)

Before the ultimate victory of the forces of righteousness, some skirmishes will be lost. Even these, however, must leave a record so that the choices before the people are clear and let others do as they will in the face of prophetic counsel. There will also be times, happily, when a minor defeat seems probable, that others will step forward, having been rallied to righteousness by what we do. We will know the joy, on occasion, of having awakened a slumbering majority of the decent people of all races and creeds – a majority which was, till then, unconscious of itself.

-Neal A. Maxwell, ["Meeting the Challenges of Today," Address given at BYU, 10/10/78](#)

Whatever the dimension of patriotism, therefore, it requires that America have and maintain a spiritual core in order that our hopes are not in vain. Without this spiritual core, our liberties, our cities, our fiscal policies and our brotherhood will finally fail and falter. Virtue must, therefore, reside in the people as well as in the leaders. John Adams so cautioned, saying: "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

-Neal A. Maxwell, [Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 7/4/93](#)

The Prophet Moroni seemed greatly exercised lest in our day we might not be able to recognize the startling fact that the same secret societies which destroyed the Jaredites and decimated numerous kingdoms of both Nephites and Lamanites would be precisely the same form of criminal conspiracy which would rise up among the gentile nations in this day.

The stratagems of the leaders of these societies are amazingly familiar to anyone who has studied the tactics of modern communist leaders.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1961, p. 72](#)

I wish you ever to remember this when you think of yourselves, your brethren, or of any man that wants influence in the world. Always learn what an individual wants influence for. If he wants it for good, to promote peace and righteousness, never hinder his efforts, but promote them if you can. But when men try to gain influence for evil, to lead their fellow creatures in the way to death, exercise all the power you possess to abridge such influence; destroy it if you can. I calculate to take this course myself.

-President Brigham Young, 1867, [Journal of Discourses, 12:18-19](#)

Now, I am not caring today, for myself, anything at all about a political party tag. So far as I am concerned, I want to know what the man stands for. I want to know if he believes in the Constitution; if he believes in its free institutions; if he believes in its liberties, its freedom. I want to know if he believes in the Bill of Rights. I want to know if he believes in the separation of sovereign power into the three great divisions: the Legislative, the Judicial, the Executive. I want to know if he believes in the mutual independence of these, the one from the other. When I find out these things, then I know who it is who should receive my support, and I care not what his party tag is, because, brethren, if we are to live as a Church, and progress, and have the right to worship as we are worshipping here today, we must have the great guarantees that are set up by our Constitution. There is no other way in which we can secure these guarantees. You may look at the systems all over the world where the principles of our Constitution are not controlling and in force, and you will find there dictatorship, tyranny, oppression, and, in the last analysis, slavery... Today, our duty transcends party allegiance; our duty today is allegiance to the Constitution as it was given to us by the Lord.

-J. Reuben Clark, [Conference Report, October 1942, p. 59](#)

I have faith that the Constitution will be saved as prophesied by Joseph Smith. But it will not be saved in Washington. It will be saved by the citizens of this nation who love and cherish freedom. It will be saved by enlightened members of this Church - men and women who will subscribe to and abide by the principles of the Constitution.

-President Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Constitution - A Heavenly Banner," Address given at BYU, 9/16/86](#)

We engage in the election the same as in any other principle: you are to vote for good men, and if you do not do this it is a sin: to vote for wicked men, it would be sin. Choose the good and refuse the evil. Men of false principles have preyed upon us like wolves upon helpless lambs. Damn the rod of tyranny; curse it. Let every man use his liberties according to the Constitution. Don't fear man or devil; electioneer with all people, male and female, and exhort them to do the thing that is right. We want a President of the U.S., not a party President, but a President of the whole people; for a party President disfranchises the opposite party. Have a President who will maintain every man in his rights.

-Hyrum Smith, 1844, [The Documentary History of the Church](#), 6:323

Other nations might boast of their kings, but the King of America, proclaimed by the patriotic fathers who founded it and established it, is the great God of Heaven. This must continue to be the sentiment of the people of America if these glorious institutions shall be preserved, and in our hands is the sacred keeping of these great and glorious principles.

-Melvin J. Ballard, [Conference Report, October 1928, p. 109](#)

I have sometimes said that our great American way of life is based on three solid pillars. We might say four because at the basis of all of it is spirituality. But these three pillars are: First, private enterprise – the right to venture, the right to choose; second, private property – the right to own; third, a market

economy – the right to exchange, the right to sell your own labor or the products of your own hands. All of these are absent under communism.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Proper Role of Government," Address given at BYU, 10/21/68](#)

The devil has declared war against the Saints (see D&C 76:29), and he has declared war against the United States of America and would destroy it if he could. The scripture says that he will attempt to encompass us round about and seek to destroy us. He would weaken our allegiance to God by luring us into sin, and he would weaken our great nation as a means of destroying the work of God because this nation is essential to the promulgation of the gospel on a worldwide basis.

-Mark E. Petersen, ["America - World Leader," Address given at BYU, 7/4/76](#)

No one can be more opposed to an unhallowed alliance [between Church and State] of this kind than ourselves; but while we would deprecate any alliance having a tendency to deprive the sons of liberty of their rights, we cannot but think that the course taken by many of our politicians is altogether culpable - that the division is extending too far, and that in our jealousy, lest a union of this kind should take place, we have thrust out God from all our political movements, and seem to regard the affairs of the nation as that over which the Great Jehovah's providence has no control, about which His direction or interposition never should be sought, and as a thing conducted and directed by human wisdom alone.

Either God has something to do in our national affairs, or he has not. If he has the oversight and charge of them - if "he raises up one kingdom and puts down another, according to the counsel of his own will" - if "the powers that be, are ordained of God," then it becomes necessary for us, in all our political movements, to look to God for his benediction and blessing. But if God has nothing to do with them, we will act consistently - we will cease to pray for the president, our legislators, or any of our rulers, and each one will pursue his own course, and "God shall not be in all our thoughts," so far as politics are concerned.

-John Taylor, 1844, [The Millennial Star, 5:8-9](#)

In our day the Lord has declared to His church, "Verily I say unto you all: Arise and shine forth, that thy light may be a standard for the nations; And that the gathering together upon the land of Zion, and upon her stakes, may be for a defense, and for a refuge from the storm, and from wrath when it shall be poured out without mixture upon the whole earth" (D&C 115:5-6).

Will we of the priesthood arise and shine? Will we provide the defense and refuge? Now is our time and our season for corrective and courageous action.

We have been warned again and again and again. The Lord's spokesman has consistently raised his voice of warning about the loss of our freedom. Now he that has ears, let him hear. And you who praise the Lord, learn to also follow His spokesman.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

We go back to the prophetic words of Alexis de Tocqueville, who came here from France as a young man in the early 1800s. After traveling widely he said, "I sought for the key to the greatness and genius of America in her harbors, in her fertile fields and boundless forests, in her rich minds and vast commerce, in her public school system and institutions of learning. I sought for it in her democratic congress and in her matchless Constitution, but not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits aflame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and her power. America is great because America is good. And if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great."

I am convinced that if we are to continue to have the freedoms which came of the inspiration of the Almighty to our Founding Fathers, we must return to the God who is their true author. We need to worship him in spirit and in truth. We need to acknowledge his all-powerful hand. We need to humble ourselves before him and seek his guidance in all that concerns matters of state.

-President Gordon B. Hinckley, [Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 1997](#)

Let us resolve to make our own families truly free by teaching them that God holds us all accountable. His laws are absolutes; breaking them brings misery and unhappiness; keeping them brings joy, happiness, and the blessings of heaven. Let us teach our families and others the importance of moral responsibility based on the laws of God.

The freedom we give thanks for is at stake – for ourselves and for our posterity.

No nation or people that rejects God or His commandments can prosper or find happiness. History and the scriptures are filled with examples of nations that rejected God. Let us be wise and remember the source of our blessings and not be timid or apologetic in sharing this knowledge with others.

-M. Russell Ballard, ["Religion in a Free Society," Ensign, October 1992](#)

Former FBI agent, Dan Smoot, succinctly points out: *"England was killed by an idea: the idea that the weak, indolent and profligate must be supported by the strong, industrious, and frugal – to the degree that tax-consumers will have a living standard comparable to that of taxpayers; the idea that government exists for the purpose of plundering those who work to give the product of their labor to those who do not work. The economic and social cannibalism produced by this communist-socialist idea will destroy any society which adopts it and clings to it as a basic principle – ANY society."*

Now this may sound heartless and insensitive to the needs of those less fortunate individuals who are found in any society, no matter how affluent. "What about the lame, the sick and the destitute?" is an often-voiced question. Most other countries in the world have attempted to use the power of government to meet this need. Yet, in every case, the improvement has been marginal at best and has, in the long run, created more misery, more poverty, and certainly less freedom than when government first stepped in.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Proper Role of Government," Address given at BYU, 10/21/68](#)

In America the Beautiful ... we rightly sing about a good America and how it should be "crowned with brotherhood." Instead of increasing brotherhood, there is increasing separatism in America. There is even rising racism. There is also a decrease in the respect among our citizens for each other. Engulfing gangs almost daily remind us of failing families and neighborhoods.

We sing, too, about how our "alabaster cities gleam, undimmed by human tears." Our cities don't gleam. Many are decaying, covered with graffiti. They are dimmed with human tears of desperation by those who feel left out of the American dream. The challenges of urban decay actually threaten to overwhelm America. Thomas Jefferson was especially far-seeing when he said that "once people were piled on top of people in America," as they were then in Europe, "America would have very serious problems." We do. Surely, therefore, we much need the wise expressions of patriotism which will improve the quality of life in our decaying cities.

-Neal A. Maxwell, [Address given at Provo Freedom Festival, 7/4/93](#)

We sing that we are thankful to God for a prophet to guide us in these latter days. By commandment of the Lord we assemble in General Conference twice a year to get that guidance from the Lord's representative. Do we realize that in the last five years prior to October conference the prophet has keynoted three of these conferences with an opening discourse on freedom and given nine other addresses in the conferences that touch on freedom?

Do we see any pattern here? Can we name any other gospel theme that has received as much emphasis from the man who holds the keys as has the theme of freedom? We do not need a prophet, we have one. What we need is a listening ear, a humble heart and a soul that is pure enough to follow his inspired guidance.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

I reverence the Constitution of the United States as a sacred document. To me its words are akin to the revelations of God, for God has placed His stamp of approval on the Constitution of this land. I testify that the God of heaven sent some of His choicest spirits to lay the foundation of this government, and He has sent other choice spirits - even you who hear my words this day - to preserve it.

We, the blessed beneficiaries, face difficult days in this beloved land, "a land which is choice above all other lands" (Ether 2:10). It may also cost us blood before we are through. It is my conviction, however, that when the Lord comes, the Stars and Stripes will be floating on the breeze over this people. May it be so, and may God give us the faith and the courage exhibited by those patriots who pledged their lives and fortunes that we might be free.

-President Ezra Taft Benson, ["The Constitution - A Heavenly Banner," Address given at BYU, 9/16/86](#)

Notwithstanding all our achievements, social unrest was never more pronounced than it is today. We are living in an age of shifting opinions, of swiftly changing human relations. Man's wisdom is baffled. Obviously, there never was a greater need for anchorage to fixed principles and never-changing truths.

Men are in need of a safe pilot to serve as a guide over the troubled and turbulent waters through which we are now sailing...

The world needs fundamentals, eternal verities that never change. It needs to adopt the teachings of the One into whose hands the soldiers drove the iron spikes, "the only world-conqueror who came with clean hands," from whom down through the centuries have come these assuring words: "...I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

...Never before in the history of the world has there been such a need as today for spiritual awakening.

-President David O. McKay, 1962, [The Instructor, 97:1-2](#)

A value-free society eventually imprisons its inhabitants. It also ends up doing indirectly what most of its inhabitants would never have agreed to do directly – at least initially.

Can we turn such trends around? There is still a wealth of wisdom in the people of this good land, even though such wisdom is often mute and in search of leadership. People can often feel in their bones the wrongness of things, long before pollsters pick up such attitudes or before such attitudes are expressed in the ballot box. But it will take leadership and articulate assertion of basic values in all places and in personal behavior to back up such assertions. Even then, time and the tides are against us, so that courage will be a key ingredient.

-Neal A. Maxwell, ["The Prohibitive Costs of a Value-Free Society," Ensign, October 1978](#)

We should also keep in mind, in my humble judgment, that economics and morals are both parts of one inseparable body of truth and these must be in harmony. We must square our actions and our policies with these eternal principles if this nation would be preserved and not go the way of Rome and other dead civilizations, [and] if we would enjoy the fulfillment of the promises which have been made by the prophets, ancient and modern, regarding this great land.

There is a force, my fellow Americans, in the universe which no mortal can alter. We need to see to it that our policies and our programs conform with those eternal principles which have been set forth by that force, by the God of Heaven. In other words, we need to raise our sights beyond the dollar sign, beyond material things. We need to recognize that America has become a great nation because she has adhered wholeheartedly to certain basic Christian principles that are eternal. We must have an adherence to these high moral principles, these spiritual principles, if this nation would endure. God grant that it may endure!

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Responsibilities of Citizenship," Address given at BYU, 10/22/54](#)

Because today government has touched our daily lives so intimately in all their relationships, and all these governmental touchings have been so tabbed as political, that we cannot discuss anything relating to our material welfare and existence without laying ourselves liable to the charge that we are talking politics. Yet, where any matter touched by the State has to do with our spiritual welfare, our religion,

the church (meaning all churches) not only may but must be concerned. For as the Church may not interfere with the State, so the State may not interfere with the Church, subject to certain limitations.
-J. Reuben Clark, [Church News](#), 6/16/45

This nation has a spiritual foundation—a prophetic history. Every true Latter-day Saint should love the United States of America—the most generous nation under heaven—the Lord’s base of operations in these last days. May we do all in our power to strengthen and safeguard this base and increase our freedom.

This nation will, I feel sure, endure. It is God-ordained for a glorious purpose. We must never forget that the gospel message we bear to the world is to go forth to the world from this nation. And that gospel message can prosper only in an atmosphere of freedom. We must maintain and strengthen our freedom in this blessed land.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["This Nation Shall Endure," Address given at BYU, 12/4/73](#)

Assuredly in the preservation of virtue, morality, and intelligence she [America] may look for the perpetuity of her free institutions, and the preservation of her liberty. And in the moment of her disregard of these principles, when wickedness and sin can run riot with impunity, and not moral influence and force enough be found in the people to check it, and walk it under foot, then may she reckon on a speedy downfall.

When moral obligations cease to exert an influence, and virtue hides its face, and the unblushing effrontery of sin and foul corruption takes its place, then may the nation consider there is danger.
"When the wicked rule the people mourn."

...To serve God and keep His commandments, are first and foremost with me. If this is higher law, so be it. As it is with me, so should it be with every department of the government; for this doctrine is based upon the principles of virtue and integrity; with it the government, her Constitution, and free institutions are safe; without it no power can avert their speedy destruction. It is the life-giving power to the government; it is the vital element on which she exists and prospers; in its absence she sinks to rise no more.

-President Brigham Young, 1855, [Journal of Discourses, 2:176](#)

One of the most urgent, heart-stirring appeals made by Moroni as he closed the Book of Mormon was addressed to the gentile nations of the last days. He foresaw the rise of a great world-wide secret combination among the gentiles which "...seeketh to overthrow the freedom of all lands, nations, and countries..." (Ether 8:25). He warned each gentile nation of the last days to purge itself of this gigantic criminal conspiracy which would seek to rule the world.

The prophets, in our day, have continually warned us of these internal threats in our midst - that our greatest threat from socialistic-communism lies within our country. Brethren and sisters, we don't need a prophet - we have one - we need a listening ear. And if we do not listen and heed, then, as the

Doctrine and Covenants states, "...the day cometh that they who will not hear the voice of the Lord, neither the voice of his servants, neither give heed to the words of the prophets and apostles, shall be cut off from among the people" (D&C 1:14).

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1961, p. 71](#)

Then there is the weakness that comes from the encroachment of atheism in our schools. Masquerading under the cloak of anthropology with great emphasis upon evolution, atheism is weakening the religious faith of the nation, and thus it also becomes an ally of the adversary.

Is it any wonder that Lincoln, almost prophetically, looked into our future and foretold the perils that would confront us? Speaking to the young men's lyceum of Springfield, Illinois, on the subject of the perpetuity of American institutions, Lincoln said this:

"America need not fear danger from without. All the armies of Europe, Asia, and Africa combined with a Bonaparte as a commander could not by force take a drink from the Ohio River or make a track on the Blue Ridge Mountains in a trial of a thousand years. If danger ever threatens the United States, it will come from within. As a nation of free men we must live through all time or die by suicide."

-Mark E. Petersen, ["America - World Leader," Address given at BYU, 7/4/76](#)

It is the duty of a Saint of God to gain all the influence he can on this earth, and to use every particle of that influence to do good. If this is not his duty, I do not understand what the duty of man is.

-President Brigham Young, 1869, [Journal of Discourses, 12:376](#)

If representative government is to function effectively under our constitutions, we must have civility in political discourse. We currently have an excess of ugliness and contentiousness in our communications on many political issues. I don't need to give examples; we have all been exposed to it, and some of us have occasionally been part of it. We all bear some responsibility for the current political polarization and the stalemates that have resulted from it. We ought to tone it down. Meaningful debate and discussion about policies, programs, and procedures is essential to a democratic society.

But contentiousness for the sake of division is bad for democracy. It is bad for law observance. It is bad for neighborly relations. And it is particularly destructive as an example for the rising generation, who, if not taught better, will perpetuate and magnify its ugliness and divisiveness for generations to come.

A year ago our Church published a statement called "The Mormon Ethic of Civility." I quote from that statement: "The Church views with concern the politics of fear and rhetorical extremism that renders civil discussion impossible. . . . Our democratic system [should] facilitate kinder and more reasoned exchanges among fellow Americans than we are now seeing."

-Dallin H. Oaks, ["Fundamentals of Our Constitution," Address given at Salt Lake City, UT, 9/17/10](#)

Oh God, our Eternal Father, thou who presides over the nations and their people, we come unto thee in prayer. We thank thee for this great and sovereign nation of which we are citizens. Touch the minds of those of our Congress that they shall stand tall and independent in defense of the liberty of the people. Bless the chief executive. He is our president. Let thy spirit move upon him to bring to pass those measures which will lift the burdens of government from the backs of the people and keep this nation under God, a citadel of freedom standing as an example to all the world. Bless the Supreme Court of the United States which in recent days has declared unconstitutional a measure designed to secure the religious liberty of the people of this nation. May a way be found under thy divine inspiration to bring to pass another measure which will be sustained by the court. May thy peace rest upon this nation. May we as a people look to thee and live. May the benevolent hand of the Almighty protect us from the evil forces of the world. May humanism and secularism bend to an increased knowledge of these our Father and our God. May a spirit of brotherhood spread throughout the land. As we pray to thee, we do so in our manner and respect the prayers of others who speak after their manner. That thou wilt hear us all as we lift our voices in behalf of our beloved nation. Almighty Father, hear us, guide us, protect us, make us both strong and benevolent before the world. Forgive our erring ways. May we turn back to thee in our search for wisdom, for guidance, for direction, we humbly ask in Jesus' sacred name, Amen.

-President Gordon B. Hinckley, [Prayer offered at the Provo Freedom Festival, 1997](#)

I like a good government, and then I like to have it wisely and justly administered. The government of heaven, if wickedly administered, would become one of the worst governments upon the face of the earth. No matter how good a government is, unless it is administered by righteous men, an evil government will be made of it.

-President Brigham Young, 1863, [Journal of Discourses, 10:177](#)

We are frankly gravely concerned over the increasing tendency of the Federal Government to assume more responsibilities with an ever-increasing indebtedness. In this respect we note your statement that the Federal Government controls most of the revenue in this nation through the federal income tax, and that you, therefore, think that the Federal Government should take on this new burden. In our judgment, the tendency of the Federal Government more and more to control the revenue of the country should be reversed, not increased.

-President David O. McKay, *Letter to Representative Ralph R. Harding*, [Church News](#), 11/10/62

I remind you at this point that Lincoln, speaking before the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield in 1837 (he was not yet 28 years old), with far-flung vision and prophecy, declared that our country need not fear all the armies of the world...

He affirmed our real danger would come from the hands of some ambitious man who would rise up from amongst ourselves and burning and thirsting for distinction, would gratify his ambition, whether by emancipating slaves or enslaving freemen. Events of the past few years have abundantly shown how this tragic fate of enslaving freemen might be brought to us.

-J. Reuben Clark, [Church News](#), 11/29/52

In this mighty struggle [of preserving freedom] each of you has a part. Be on the right side. Stand up and be counted. And if you get discouraged, remember the words of Edward Everett Hale when he said:

I am only one, but I am one.

I can't do everything, but I can do something.

What I can do, that I ought to do.

What I ought to do, by the grace of God, I shall do.

God bless us to heed the oft-repeated counsel of our prophet leader.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["Our Immediate Responsibility," Address given at BYU, 10/25/66](#)

It is time to get involved and take a stand for religious freedom. There is so much you can do to ensure a culture where religious freedom has an honored place in American life.

Begin by becoming informed. Study the principles of the American founding and teach them in your families. Teach your families to cherish America's heritage of freedom. Teach them the importance of religion to our nation and society. Teach them to respect the faith of all people, even those with very different beliefs. And teach them that respecting religious freedom means tolerating religious beliefs, speech, and practices we disagree with. That is the price of asking others to respect our own freedoms. Next, speak up. Churches and people of faith must not allow themselves to be intimidated and silenced. Your opinions count. You have a right to speak and to be heard. Make the effort to stay informed about issues of public importance, and then speak out with courage and civility—and I do emphasize civility. Whatever your faith, our society needs your voice, your experience, and your goodness.

Next, get involved. You don't need to run for president or Congress to make a big difference. To borrow a phrase from another LDS leader, "lift where you stand." The crisis of religious freedom is as much a cultural crisis as a political or legal one. So get involved in the cultural and civic organizations around you so that you can influence them to respect religious freedom. Be active in the PTA and express your views to the school board; the future of religious freedom will depend a great deal on what our children are taught. If you're a professional or run a business, get involved with your professional association or the chamber of commerce; the lack of business and professional support for religious freedom is a real concern. You can make a difference. Participate in your political party and help guide it toward sound principles. Write your representatives. Make it a family tradition to vote regularly. There are numerous opportunities to get involved right in your own community.

Finally and above all, as the Apostle Paul wrote, "be ... an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." Whatever your religion, "live your faith so that others ... will see your good works, experience your genuine love and friendship, and feel [God] working through you." Americans tend to respect and protect what they believe is good. So let us show them the highest and best in our faiths—our willingness to love and serve others, to build strong families, to live honorable lives, to be good citizens. As our fellow citizens see the goodness of your faith, "they will want to listen to you and understand when you say your religious freedom is being abridged. They may not agree with you or even understand entirely the issue that is so important to you. But if they know you and respect you because you are a true [example of the believers], they will be far more inclined to work toward a solution that respects [essential] religious freedoms.

- D. Todd Christofferson, [Provo Freedom Festival, 6/26/16](#)

...[T]he true meaning of tolerance is often misunderstood. Tolerance has its distinct limits... Tolerance is not conformity to the world's view and practices. We must not surrender our beliefs to get along with people, however beloved or influential they may be... The gospel rests upon eternal truth, and truth can never be deserted safely. Allegiance to truth, as well as tolerance, is of the Lord.

-John A. Widtsoe, [Conference Report, April 1941, p. 115-116](#)

We who hold the Priesthood must beware concerning ourselves, that we do not fall into the traps he lays to rob us of our freedom. We must be careful that we are not led to accept or support in any way any organization, cause, or measure which, in its remotest effect, would jeopardize free agency, whether it be in politics, government, religion, employment, education, or any other field. It is not enough for us to be sincere in what we support. We must be right!

-Marion G. Romney, [Conference Report, October 1960, p. 75](#)

At the birth of the Savior, a multitude of the heavenly host praised God and proclaimed, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men."

However, it has been poignantly noted that even in this eternally significant period following the birth of the Son of God, Herod the king carried out the slaughter of innocent infants in Bethlehem.

Agency is essential to the plan of happiness. It allows for the love, sacrifice, personal growth, and experience necessary for our eternal progression. This agency also allows for all the pain and suffering we experience in mortality, even when caused by things we do not understand and the devastating evil choices of others. The very War in Heaven was waged over our moral agency and is essential to understanding the Savior's earthly ministry.

-Quentin L. Cook, [April 2013 General Conference](#)

Religious liberty is the oldest of the internationally recognized "human rights," providing motivation, precedent, and support for the growth of other freedoms, such as the freedoms of speech, the press, and assembly. For many of the Founding Fathers, and for many Americans today, religious liberty is the basic civil liberty because faith in God and his teachings and the active practice of religion are the most fundamental guiding realities of life. Thus, for many citizens, religious liberty provides the reason all other civil liberties are desired.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [Ensign, July 1990](#)

The Declaration of Independence affirms that governments are instituted to secure the inalienable rights with which men and women are endowed by their Creator. The United States Constitution was established to provide a practical and official guarantee of those rights. Its provision securing religious liberty was divinely inspired, not only to bless the inhabitants of this nation but also to stand as an example to all the nations of the world.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [Ensign, July 1990](#)

As a result of misunderstanding the importance of religious liberty in our Constitutional order, many citizens and even some educators have come to consider it bad taste or even illegal for public school teachers even to mention religious influences or commitments. No wonder we suffer an appalling ignorance of our political and cultural origins.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [Ensign, July 1990](#)

By law, the public schools of the United States must be non-denominational. They can have no part in securing acceptance of any one of the numerous systems of belief regarding God and the relation of mankind thereto. Now let us remember and emphasize *that restriction applies to the atheist as well as to the believer in God.*

-David O. McKay, [Relief Society Magazine, December 1962, p. 878](#)

The real tragedy in America is not that we have permitted the Bible to slip out of our public schools, but that we have so openly neglected to teach it in either the home or the Church.

Never before was there such need of revitalizing the teaching of faith and repentance on the part of parents. Never before in the history of our country was the state in greater need of young men and young women who cherish the higher life in preference to the sordid, the selfish, and the obscene.

-David O. McKay, [Relief Society Magazine, December 1962, p. 879](#)

Recent rulings of the Supreme Court would have all reference to a Creator eliminated from our public schools and public offices.

It is a sad day when the Supreme Court of the United States would discourage all reference in our schools to the influence of the phrase 'divine providence' as used by our founders of the Declaration of Independence.

Evidently the Supreme Court misinterprets the true meaning of the First Amendment and are now leading a Christian nation down the road to atheism.

-David O. McKay, Church News, 6/22/63

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints recognizes that a vital cornerstone of a free society is the principle of religious liberty. The First Amendment to the United States Constitution forbids any 'law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.' Ours has been a society which encourages religious liberty and toleration... We, thus, deplore the growing efforts to establish irreligion, such as atheism or secularism, as the official position of the United States of America, thus obscuring and eroding the rich and diverse religious heritage of our nation.

-First Presidency Statement, [3/9/79](#)

During the course of our history members of our Church have been the victims of official persecution motivated by religious intolerance. We are, therefore, committed by experience as well as by precept to the wisdom of a constitutional principle that government and public officials should maintain a position of respectful neutrality in the matter of religion... But the constitutional principle of neutrality toward religion does not call for our nation to ignore its religious heritage, including the religious motivations of its founders and the powerful religious beliefs of generations of its people and its leaders.

-First Presidency Statement, [3/9/79](#)

Those who oppose all references to God in our public life have set themselves the task of rooting out historical facts and ceremonial tributes and symbols so ingrained in our national consciousness that their elimination could only be interpreted as an official act of hostility toward religion. Our constitutional law forbids that.

-First Presidency Statement, [3/9/79](#)

As the ruling principle of conduct in the lives of many millions of our citizens, religion should have an honorable place in the public life of our nation, and the name of Almighty God should have sacred use in its public expressions. We urge our members and people of good will everywhere to unite to protect and honor the spiritual and religious heritage of our nation and to resist the forces that would transform the public position of the United States from the constitutional position of neutrality to a position of hostility toward religion.

-First Presidency Statement, [3/9/79](#)

There seems to be developing a new civil religion. The civil religion I refer to is a secular religion. It has no moral absolutes. It is nondenominational. It is nontheistic. It is politically focused. It is antagonistic to religion. It rejects the historic religious traditions of America. It feels strange. If this trend continues, nonbelief will be more honored than belief. While all beliefs must be protected, are atheism, agnosticism, cynicism, and moral relativism to be more safeguarded and valued than Christianity, Judaism, and the tenets of Islam, which hold that there is a Supreme Being and that mortals are accountable to him? If so, this would, in my opinion, place America in great moral jeopardy.

-James E. Faust, [Ensign, October 1992](#)

For those who believe in God, this new civil religion fosters some of the same concerns as the state religions that prompted our forefathers to escape to the New World. Nonbelief is becoming more sponsored in the body politic than belief. History teaches well the lesson that there must be a unity in some moral absolutes in all societies for them to endure and progress. Indeed, without a national morality they disintegrate.

-James E. Faust, [Ensign, October 1992](#)

In Proverbs, we are reminded that “righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Prov. 14:34). The long history and tradition of America, which had its roots in petitions for divine guidance, is being challenged.

-James E. Faust, [Ensign, October 1992](#)

There are natural safeguards in a God-fearing people that promote respect for law and order, decency, and public civility. That restraining influence is the belief that the citizenry will be accountable to their Creator for their conduct under a high moral law. This respect for and adherence to moral law transcends the constraints of the civil and criminal codes. In a people who are not God-fearing, however, these characteristics are notably absent.

-James E. Faust, [Ensign, October 1992](#)

The new civil religion is, in my opinion, coming dangerously close to become a *de facto* state religion of secularism. Litigation—and the fear of litigation—have made school boards and local governments reluctant to publicly defend moral principles. As a consequence, fewer public institutions are willing to take the stand in defense of moral values. With the public religion now turning increasingly toward the secular, I wonder how this nation will preserve its values.

-James E. Faust, [Ensign, October 1992](#)

So now we find ourselves in a situation where, unlike the Pilgrims, the Mormon pioneers, and others, there is nowhere to go to escape a new civil *de facto* secular state religion that continually limits public religious expression and fosters instead the secular values and expressions. How do we preserve the essence of our humanity? Surely we must begin in our homes. We must teach our children and grandchildren.

-James E. Faust, [Ensign, October 1992](#)

The moral teachings of all our churches must have an honored place in our society. The general decline in the moral fabric of the citizenry places a greater responsibility on homes and churches to teach values—morality, decency, respect for others, patriotism, and honoring and sustaining the law.

-James E. Faust, [Ensign, October 1992](#)

The establishment and free exercise clauses should be read together to harmonize the importance of religious liberty with freedom from government regulation. Rather, today in our nation the establishment clause is being used to restrict religious institutions from playing a role in civic issues, and the free exercise clause denies to individuals their religious liberty. It does not accord the equivalent to what the Constitution accords to secularism—the new civil religion.

-James E. Faust, [Ensign, October 1992](#)

[One] thing believers can do to stand as witnesses of God is to support public recognition of the blessings of God. This seeks to counter the diminishing mention of religious faith and references to God and His blessings in our public discourse.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU-I, 2/25/14](#)

Contrast current public documents and the current rhetoric of government leaders with the similar documents and words of leaders in the first two centuries of our nation. In that contrast you will have evidence of deliberate efforts to edit out references to God and the influence of religion in our nation's founding and preservation.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU-I, 2/25/14](#)

[W]e can set the right example in our family and Church teachings by acknowledging the blessings of the Lord in the establishment of this nation. To do this "in wisdom and order" we should not seem to deny that this nation includes and is blessed by citizens of Jewish, Muslim, Atheist, and other non-Christian persuasions. But we should speak truthfully of the fact that this nation was founded by persons and leaders who were predominantly Christians and who embodied the principles of their faith in the constitution, laws, and culture of this nation.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU-I, 2/25/14](#)

We should also contend for the inclusion in textbooks and teaching in school settings of accurate accounts of great historical documents that recognize and invoke the blessings of God in the founding and preservation of this nation. I refer to such as George Washington's farewell letter to the thirteen colonies when he retired as Commander in Chief of the Continental Army. He ended with a prayer to "Almighty God... that Thou wilt keep the United States in Thy Holy protection," and concluded, "Grant our supplication, we beseech Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Benjamin Franklin's stirring call for prayer at the Constitutional Convention is well known. Lincoln invoked the blessings of God in many of his formal communications, including the Emancipation Proclamation and his great Second Inaugural Address. Such acknowledgements and pleas are part of our history and should not be omitted from our memories or our culture.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU-I, 2/25/14](#)

[The] symbol of prayer has been under legal attack for over 50 years, first in public school classrooms, where prayers were outlawed fifty years ago, and now in college graduations, city council meetings, and other public settings. Whatever the designated pray-er's concept of God and whatever his or her religious persuasion or language of prayer, I hope the citizens of this nation can continue to witness their belief in God by the symbol of prayer, wisely and tolerantly administered. That is worth contending for.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU-I, 2/25/14](#)

[W]e should be alert to oppose the potential significance of the fact that some government officials and public policy advocates are describing the First Amendment guarantee of the "free exercise" of religion as merely "freedom of worship." But, the guarantee of "free exercise" protects the right to come out of our private settings, including churches, synagogues and mosques, to *act* upon our beliefs, subject only to the legitimate government powers necessary to protect public health, safety, and welfare. Free exercise surely protects religious citizens in acting upon their beliefs in public policy debates and in votes cast as citizens or as law-makers.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU-I, 2/25/14](#)

I say to my fellow Latter-day Saints--and I suggest to all believers everywhere--that we have a solemn religious duty to be witnesses of God. We must affirm our religious faiths, unite to insist upon our constitutional right to the free exercise of our religions, and honor their vital roles in establishing and preserving and prospering this nation.

I remind my fellow Christians of the solemn teaching of the Apostle John: "And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world" (1 John 4:3).

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU-I, 2/25/14](#)

Be an advocate for religious freedom and morality. This is a time when those who feel accountable to God for their conduct feel under siege by a secular world. You understand the moral principles that are under attack and the need to defend morality. Religious freedom all over the world is also under attack. It is important for your generation to become well educated on this issue and assume responsibility for ensuring that the religious freedom you have inherited is passed on to future generations. We must work together to both protect religious freedom and restore morality.

-Quentin L. Cook, [BYU-I, 12/16/11](#)

If we fail to diligently protect religious freedom, we risk diminishing other important freedoms that are important both to us and to society. Our challenge is to help people without religious faith understand that the protection of moral principles grounded in religion is a great benefit to society and that religious devotion is critical to public virtue.

-Quentin L. Cook, [BYU-I, 12/16/11](#)

One of the reasons the attack on the moral or religious principles has been so successful is the reluctance of people of faith to express their views.

-Quentin L. Cook, [BYU-I, 12/16/11](#)

Extraordinary effort will be required to protect religious liberty. Our doctrine confirms what both political philosophers and Founding Fathers advocated. Doctrine and Covenants 134:2 reads, “No government can exist in peace, except such laws are framed and held inviolate as will secure to each individual the free exercise of conscience.” Religious conscience is grounded in one’s belief in being accountable to God for conduct. The effort of secularists or governments to coerce conduct in conflict with religious conscience leads to social disunity and is a primary reason why religious liberty is essential for civil peace.

-Quentin L. Cook, [BYU-I, 12/16/11](#)

My challenge today is that you join with people of all faiths who feel accountable to God in defending religious freedom so it can be a beacon for morality. We caution you to be civil and responsible as you defend religious liberty and moral values. We ask that you do this on the Internet and in your personal interactions in the neighborhoods and communities where you live. Be an active participant, not a silent observer.

-Quentin L. Cook, [BYU-I, 12/16/11](#)

In our day civil governments have a vested interest in protecting marriage because strong families constitute the best way of providing for the health, education, welfare, and prosperity of rising generations. But civil governments are heavily influenced by social trends and secular philosophies as they write, rewrite, and enforce laws. Regardless of what civil legislation may be enacted, the doctrine of the Lord regarding marriage and morality *cannot be changed*. Remember: sin, even if legalized by man, is still sin in the eyes of God!

-Russell M. Nelson, [October 2013 General Conference](#)

Irreligion has become very bold. It is more and more openly resentful of religion. In effect, irreligion has told religion to “go to the back of the bus” and to be quiet! In the inspired United States Constitution there is not, and could not really be, an “establishment clause” prohibiting the assertive ascendancy of irreligion or of strident secularism.

It would have been just like local, secular government, way back then, to criticize Noah for building an ark with timber which might have been utilized to expand the local zoo! On the other hand, had Noah lived in our highly regulated day, he probably would have been refused a building permit!

-Neal A. Maxwell, *That Ye May Believe*, pp. 99-100

[T]here is sometimes a chance for a misunderstanding, especially among young people who may think we are not supposed to judge anything, that we are never to make a value assessment of any kind. We have to help each other with that because the Savior makes it clear that in some situations we *have* to judge, we are under obligation to judge—as when He said, “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine.” That sounds like a judgment to me. The alternative is to surrender to the moral relativism of a deconstructionist, postmodern world which, pushed far enough,

posits that ultimately *nothing* is eternally true or especially sacred and, therefore, no one position on any given issue matters more than any other. And that simply is not true.

-Jeffrey R. Holland, [CES Devotional, 9/9/12](#)

When we face such situations in complex social issues in a democratic society, it can be very challenging and, to some, confusing. Young people may ask about this position taken or that policy made by the Church, saying: “Well, we don’t believe we should live or behave in such and such a way, but why do we have to make other people do the same? Don’t they have their free agency? Aren’t we being self-righteous and judgmental, forcing our beliefs on others, demanding that *they* act in a certain way?” In those situations you are going to have to explain sensitively why *some* principles are defended and *some* sins opposed *wherever they are found* because the issues and the laws involved are *not* just social or political but eternal in their consequence. And while not wishing to offend those who believe differently from us, we are even more anxious not to offend God, or as the scripture says, “not offend him who is your lawgiver” and I *am* speaking here of serious moral laws.

-Jeffrey R. Holland, [CES Devotional, 9/9/12](#)

[T]here is a wide variety of beliefs in this world, and there is moral agency for all, but no one is entitled to act as if God is mute on these subjects or as if commandments only matter if there is public agreement over them. In the 21st century we cannot flee any longer. We are going to have to fight for laws and circumstances and environments that allow the free exercise of religion and our franchise in it. That is one way we can tolerate being in Babylon but not of it.

-Jeffrey R. Holland, [CES Devotional, 9/9/12](#)

Sometimes those who raise a warning voice are dismissed as judgmental. Paradoxically, however, those who claim truth is relative and moral standards are a matter of personal preference are often the same ones who most harshly criticize people who don’t accept the current norm of “correct thinking.”

-D. Todd Christofferson, [April 2017 General Conference](#)

We trust that especially you of the rising generation, youth and young adults on whom the Lord must rely for the success of His work in future years, will sustain the teachings of the gospel and the standards of the Church in public as well as in private. Do not abandon those who would welcome truth to floundering and failing in ignorance. Do not succumb to false notions of tolerance or to fear—fear of inconvenience, disapproval, or even suffering. Remember the Savior’s promise:

“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”

-D. Todd Christofferson, [April 2017 General Conference](#)

True disciples of Jesus Christ are willing to stand out, speak up, and be different from the people of the world. They are undaunted, devoted, and courageous... There is nothing easy or automatic about becoming such powerful disciples. Our focus must be riveted on the Savior and His gospel. It is mentally rigorous to strive to look unto Him in every thought.

-Russell M. Nelson, [April 2017 General Conference](#)

As we earnestly strive to be true disciples of Jesus Christ, these characteristics will be interwoven, added upon, and interactively strengthened in us. There will be no disparity between the kindness we show our enemies and the kindness we bestow on our friends. We will be as honest when no one is looking as when others are watching. We will be as devoted to God in the public square as we are in our private closet.

-Robert D. Hales, [April 2017 General Conference](#)

As a watchman on the tower, I feel to warn you that one of the chief means of misleading our youth and destroying the family unit is our educational institutions. President Joseph F. Smith referred to false educational ideas as one of the three threatening dangers among our Church members...

It is important that you stay close to your children, daily review, if possible, what they have learned in school, and go over their textbooks.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1970, p. 22](#)

I never entered the classrooms of learning there where students are taught concerning the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, the Constitution and other monumental foundation principles but what I had the feeling that I was walking on sacred ground.

-Thomas S. Monson, "God Bless America", 9/17/2002

As quoted in *Teachings of Thomas S. Monson*

One of the most famous enlistment posters of World War II was one depicting Uncle Sam pointing his long finger and directing his piercing eyes at the viewer. The words read, "America Needs You." America truly does need you and me to lead out in a mighty crusade of righteousness. We can help when we love God and with our families serve Him; and when we love our neighbor as ourselves.

-Thomas S. Monson, "Duty-Honor-Country," 5/29/03

As quoted in *Teachings of Thomas S. Monson*

Are we today serving the God of the land, even the Lord Jesus Christ? Do our lives conform with His teachings? Are we entitled to His divine blessings? Too many Americans have been screaming ever louder for more and more of the things we cannot take with us and paying less and less attention to the real sources of the very happiness we seek. We have been measuring our fellow man more by balance

sheets and less by moral standards. We have developed frightening physical power and fallen into pathetic spiritual weakness.

-Thomas S. Monson, "America Needs You," 10/4/64

As quoted in *Teachings of Thomas S. Monson*

If you want to reform a nation, you begin with families, with parents who teach their children principles and values that are positive and affirmative and will lead them to worthwhile endeavors.

-Gordon B. Hinckley, [October 1996 General Conference](#)

The discipline that is needed in our lives is the discipline that comes from within. Many are crying for more legislation and stricter law enforcement. I do not disparage these as expedients, but I fear they are only expedients. Virtue, integrity, honesty do not come of imposition from without. They are the fruits of good teaching and good example, and that teaching and that example are best followed when they are found in the home.

-Gordon B. Hinckley, [The Improvement Era, January 1964, p. 33](#)

Let us be involved in good community causes. There may be situations where, with serious moral issues involved, we cannot bend on matters of principle. But in such instances we can politely disagree without being disagreeable. We can acknowledge the sincerity of those whose positions we cannot accept. We can speak of principles rather than personalities.

In those causes which enhance the environment of the community, and which are designed for the blessing of all of its citizens, let us step forward and be helpful. An attitude of self-righteousness is unbecoming a Latter-day Saint.

-Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, p. 131

Brethren, teach those for whom you are responsible the importance of good civic manners. Encourage them to become involved, remembering in public deliberations that the quiet voice of substantive reasoning is more persuasive than the noisy, screaming voice of protest. In accepting such responsibilities our people will bless their communities, their families, and the Church.

-Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, p. 131

Legal restraints against deviant moral behavior are eroding under legislative enactments and court opinions. This is done in the name of freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of choice in so-called personal matters. But the bitter fruit of these so-called freedoms has been enslavement to debauching habits and behavior that leads only to destruction. A prophet, speaking long ago, aptly described the process when he said, "And thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell." ([2 Ne. 28:21.](#))

-Gordon B. Hinckley, [October 1975 General Conference](#)

I am satisfied that there are millions upon millions of good people in this and in other lands. For the most part, husbands are faithful to wives, and wives to husbands. Their children are being reared in sobriety, industry, and faith in God. Given the strength of these, I am one who believes that the situation is far from hopeless. I am satisfied that there is no need to stand still and let the filth and violence overwhelm us, or to run in despair. The tide, high and menacing as it is, can be turned back if enough of the kind I have mentioned will add their strength to the strength of the few who are now effectively working. I believe the challenge to oppose this evil is one from which members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as citizens, cannot shrink. And if we are ever to begin, let it be now.

-Gordon B. Hinckley, [October 1975 General Conference](#)

The building of public sentiment begins with a few earnest voices. I am not one to advocate shouting defiantly or shaking fists and issuing threats in the faces of legislators. But I am one who believes that we should earnestly and sincerely and positively express our convictions to those given the heavy responsibility of making and enforcing our laws.

-Gordon B. Hinckley, [October 1975 General Conference](#)

The sad fact is that the minority who call for greater liberalization, who peddle and devour pornography, who encourage and feed on licentious display make their voices heard until those in our legislatures may come to believe that what they say represents the will of the majority. We are not likely to get that which we do not speak up for.

-Gordon B. Hinckley, [October 1975 General Conference](#)

Let our voices be heard. I hope they will not be shrill voices, but I hope we shall speak with such conviction that those to whom we speak shall know of the strength of our feeling and the sincerity of our effort. Remarkable consequences often flow from a well-written letter and a postage stamp. Remarkable results come of quiet conversation with those who carry heavy responsibilities.

-Gordon B. Hinckley, [October 1975 General Conference](#)

Speak to those who enact the regulations, the statutes, and the laws—those in government on local, state, and national levels; and those who occupy positions of responsibility as administrators of our schools. Of course, there will be some who will slam the door, some who will scoff. Discouragement may come. It has always been thus. Edmund Burke, speaking on the floor of the House of Commons in 1783, declared concerning the advocate of an unpopular cause:

“He well knows what snares are spread about his path... He is traduced and abused for his supposed motives. He will remember that obloquy is a necessary ingredient in the composition of all true glory: he will remember ... that calumny and abuse are essential parts of triumph.”

-Gordon B. Hinckley, [October 1975 General Conference](#)

Brethren and sisters, the tide of evil flows. It has become a veritable flood. Most of us, living somewhat sheltered lives, have little idea of the vast dimensions of it. Billions of dollars are involved for those who pour out pornography, for those who peddle lasciviousness, for those who deal in bestiality, in perversion, in sex and violence. God give us the strength, the wisdom, the faith, the courage as citizens to stand in opposition to these and to let our voices be heard in defense of those virtues which, when practiced in the past, made men and nations strong, and which, when neglected, brought them to decay.

-Gordon B. Hinckley, [October 1975 General Conference](#)

I marvel at the miracle of America, the land which the God of Heaven long ago declared to be a land choice above all other lands and concerning which He has made a promise and given a warning in these remarkable words: “Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ” (Ether 2:12). God bless America, for she is His creation.

-Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, p. 10

I believe in America. I am grateful for the Constitution under which this nation lives and moves and has its being. I am profoundly grateful that somehow for more than two centuries of time we have existed as a nation and grown to become the strongest and most free in the entire world. I am grateful for those men whom the God in Heaven raised up and inspired and who pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to establish this nation and its government.

-Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, p. 13

I believe in America – one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. We are, of course, not without fault. We have more than our share of crime and of every other evil to be found on the earth. I fear that we have become an arrogant people, but when all is said and done, there is no other nation quite like this nation.

-Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, p. 13

When you speak to the average citizen concerning the provisions of the Constitution he is likely to think of it in terms of the Bill of Rights rather than the Constitution itself. The Constitution sets up the machinery of government. The Bill of Rights denies to government those basic and fundamental

elements of freedom which belong to the people as their divine inheritance and which they refuse to surrender to the whims of politicians.

-Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, p. 14

[The Bill of Rights] marks one of the most significant accomplishments in the history of the United States, if not in the history of all mankind. It represents the codification of the basic, inclusive, and fundamental law of the liberties of the people which our forefathers regarded as gifts from God and not as gifts of government. These amendments prohibit the encroachment of government on these rights. We must never take them for granted... I regard it as a miracle that we have them.

-Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, p. 13-14

[L]et the people of the whole Union, like the inflexible Romans, whenever they find a *promise* made by a candidate that is not *practiced* as an officer, hurl the miserable sycophant from his exaltation.

-Joseph Smith, 1844, Documentary History of the Church, 6:207

In the United States the people are the government, and their united voice is the only sovereign that should rule, the only power that should be obeyed, and the only gentlemen that should be honored at home and abroad, on the land and on the sea.

-Joseph Smith, 1844, Documentary History of the Church, 6:208

I am the greatest advocate of the Constitution of the United States there is on the earth.

-Joseph Smith, 1843, Documentary History of the Church, 6:56-7

We... should know the Book of Mormon better than any other book. Not only should we know what history and faith-promoting stories it contains, but we should understand its teachings. If we really do our homework and approach the Book of Mormon doctrinally, we can expose the errors and find the truths to combat many of the current false theories and philosophies of men.

I have noted within the Church a difference in discernment, insight, conviction, and spirit between those who know and love the Book of Mormon and those who do not. That book is a great sifter.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Ensign, December 1988](#)

As we look about in the world among the various countries we find philosophies and forms of government the effect of which is to deprive men of their free agency, but by reason of Thy timely warning to us, we know that they are not approved of Thee. Since the God of this choice land is Jesus Christ, we know that His philosophy of free agency should prevail here. Thou didst amply demonstrate

this great principle to us by raising up wise men for the very purpose of giving us our Constitutional form of government.

-Idaho Falls Temple Dedicatory Prayer, [9/23/45](#)

There are those, our Heavenly Father, both within and without our borders who would destroy the Constitutional form of government which Thou hast so magnanimously given us, and would replace it with a form that would curtail if not altogether deprive man of his free agency. We pray Thee, therefore, that in all these matters Thou wilt help us to conform our lives to Thy desires, and that Thou wilt sustain us in our resolve so to do. We pray Thee that Thou wilt inspire good and just men everywhere to be willing to sacrifice for, support and uphold the Constitution and the government set up under it and thereby preserve for man his agency.

-Idaho Falls Temple Dedicatory Prayer, [9/23/45](#)

We pray that kings and rulers and the peoples of all nations under heaven may be persuaded of the blessings enjoyed by the people of this land by reason of their freedom under Thy guidance and be constrained to adopt similar governmental systems, thus to fulfill the ancient prophecy of Isaiah that "out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

-Idaho Falls Temple Dedicatory Prayer, [9/23/45](#)

We forget that if we are righteous the Lord will either not suffer our enemies to come upon us – and this is the special promise to the inhabitants of the land of the Americas – or he will fight our battles for us. This he is able to do, for as he said at the time of his betrayal, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" We can imagine what fearsome soldiers they would be.

-Spencer W. Kimball, [Ensign, June 1976](#)

We are profoundly grateful for the Constitution of the United States, with its Bill of Rights. These are the guarantees of our freedom and our liberty. Preserve them through the generations to come that Thy children may be free to worship Thee without restraint or hindrance of any kind.

-Idaho Falls Temple Rededicatory Prayer, [6/4/17](#)

If we are not able to build into ourselves and our families the brakes of self-restraint and self-discipline, we are apt, unwittingly, to create tyranny in our government or anarchy in our citizenry. *If we push onto the government the management not only of our economy, but also the management of our morals, the civil servants of the future will be neither civil nor servants.*

-Neal A. Maxwell, [Ensign, October 1974](#)

We are rightfully worried about the swelling bureaucracies of government, which need to respond to us – not to regiment us. But we cannot tame those bureaucracies unless we first tame our appetites, for a bloated bureaucracy is merely a manifestation of citizen appetites, demands, and the subsequent need for external controls.

-Neal A. Maxwell, [Ensign, October 1974](#)

It is ironical to note that just as we are increasing the number of some “things forbidden” by governmental standards, there is a sharp slackening of standards and “things forbidden” in the realm of taste and morality.

-Neal A. Maxwell, [Ensign, October 1974](#)

I am going to bear my testimony to this assembly, if I never do it again in my life, that those men who laid the foundation of this American government and signed the Declaration of Independence were the best spirits the God of heaven could find on the face of the earth. They were choice spirits, not wicked men. George Washington and all the men that labored for the purpose were inspired of the Lord.

-Wilford Woodruff, [Conference Report, April 1898, p. 89](#)

Have mercy, O Lord, upon all the nations of the earth; have mercy upon the rulers of our land; may those principles, which were so honorably and nobly defended, namely, the Constitution of our land, by our fathers, be established forever.

-Kirtland Temple Dedicatory Prayer, [D&C 109:54](#)

Because my faith, my family, my beliefs, my covenants – in short, my religion – means everything to me, I thank my Father in Heaven for it and pray for the continued privilege to speak of it so long as I shall live. May we think upon the religious heritage that has been handed down to us, at an incalculable price in many instances, and in so remembering not only cherish that heritage more fervently but *live the religious principles we say we want to preserve*.

-Jeffrey R. Holland, [BYU Education Week, 8/16/16](#)

The destiny of America was divinely decreed. The events which established our great nation were foreknown to God and revealed to prophets of old. As in an enacted drama, the players who came on the scene were rehearsed and selected for their parts. Their talents, abilities, capacities, and weaknesses were known before they were born.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [BYU, 3/28/77](#)

In the first century of our nation's history, the university was the guardian and the preserver of faith in God. In this present century, the university has become ethically neutral; by and large, agnostic. Our country is now reaping the effects of this agnostic influence. It has cost us an inestimable price. For who can place a price on the worth of a human soul or the cost of the cynicism that many young people have toward our republic and its leaders?

-Ezra Taft Benson, [BYU, 3/28/77](#)

As a nation we have become self-sufficient. This has given birth to a new religion in America which some have called secularism. This is a view of life without the idea that God is in the picture or that He had anything to do with the picture in the first place... Events are *only*—and I stress that—*only* explained from a humanistic frame of reference. At least that's what they say.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [BYU, 3/28/77](#)

I bear witness to you that America's history was foreknown to God; that His divine intervention and merciful providence have given us both peace and prosperity in this beloved land; that through His omniscience and benevolent design, He selected and sent some of His choicest spirits to lay the foundation of our government. These men were inspired of God to do the work which they accomplished. They were not evil men. Their work was a prologue to the restoration of the gospel and the church of Jesus Christ.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [BYU, 3/28/77](#)

Yes, you young people are privileged to live in this choice land—a land of Zion—a land reserved for the second coming of our Lord and Savior, and the Lord's base of operations today. When all these events are finished and written, we will look back and not be astonished to see that the prophecies, ancient and modern, about this land and these events were but our history in reverse. For that is what prophecy is

-Ezra Taft Benson, [BYU, 3/28/77](#)

I would have you consider soberly how this secular influence has affected the treatment of our nation's history in the textbook in the classroom. Today, students are subjected in their textbooks and classroom lectures to a subtle propaganda that there is a "natural" or a rational explanation to all causes and events. Such a position removes the need for a faith in God, or belief in His interposition in the affairs of men.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [BYU, 3/28/77](#)

Whether from inadvertence, ignorance, or other causes, the efforts governments often make (ostensibly to help the family) sometimes only hurt the family more. There are those who would define the family in such a nontraditional way that they would define it out of existence. The more governments try in vain

to take the place of the family, the less effective governments will be in performing the traditional and basic roles for which governments are formed in the first place.

-Spencer W. Kimball, [October 1980 General Conference](#)

Our political institutions—parliaments, congresses, and assemblies—cannot rescue us if our basic institution, the family, is not intact.

-Spencer W. Kimball, [October 1980 General Conference](#)

Society without basic family life is without foundation and will disintegrate into nothingness. Therefore, whenever anything so basic as the eternal family is imperiled, we have a solemn obligation to speak out, lest there be critical damage to the family institution by those who seem to be deliberately destructive of it.

-Spencer W. Kimball, [October 1980 General Conference](#)

Furthermore, many of the social restraints which in the past have helped to reinforce and to shore up the family are dissolving and disappearing. The time will come when only those who believe deeply and actively in the family will be able to preserve their families in the midst of the gathering evil around us.

-Spencer W. Kimball, [October 1980 General Conference](#)

We of all people, brothers and sisters, should not be taken in by the specious arguments that the family unit is somehow tied to a particular phase of development a mortal society is going through. We are free to resist those moves which downplay the significance of the family and which play up the significance of selfish individualism. We know the family to be eternal. We know that when things go wrong in the family, things go wrong in every other institution in society.

-Spencer W. Kimball, [October 1980 General Conference](#)

The Almighty in some degree controls among mankind, as far as they will let Him. He controls the destinies of the nations, so far as they will permit Him; yet He does not control them so far as to destroy the agency of the human family, consequently they, through their own corrupt notions, have departed from the great principles of government given by the Lord to man in the beginning.

-Orson Pratt, 1855, [Journal of Discourses, 3:70](#)

All good principles and laws have emanated from the Almighty, and have come to man by inspiration from Him. For instance, the government of the United States, or the Constitution, came from Him; it was given, we believe, by inspiration, and there are many things connected with the various institutions of men that are very good. There are many good laws and good institutions in the government of the

United States, as well as among many other governments, but the government of the United States is one of the best that has been organized among men upon the face of the earth for many generations.
-Orson Pratt, 1855, [Journal of Discourses, 3:71](#)

We have seen plainly and clearly that had it not been for the organization of this government, as has wisely and justly been said, where would have been the liberty of the Latter-day Saints. This government, then, was organized to suit the people and the circumstances in which they were placed, until they were prepared to receive a more perfect one.
-Orson Pratt, 1855, [Journal of Discourses, 3:71](#)

Many great and glorious principles are contained within the Constitution of our country, not to say that it is perfect, but it is perfect so far as it pertains to the rights and privileges of the children of men.
-Orson Pratt, 1855, [Journal of Discourses, 3:72](#)

Had not the government of the United States been framed, where would have been safety for this people? I answer, nowhere. If this Republican government had not been organized upon this continent, the kingdom of our God could not have been protected; but the hand of the Lord has been in it, and superintended its organization, and no one can hinder its progress.
-Orson Pratt, 1855, [Journal of Discourses, 3:72](#)

Great are the promises concerning this land of America. We are told unequivocally that it “is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ” ([Ether 2:12](#)). This is the crux of the entire matter—obedience to the commandments of God.
-Gordon B. Hinckley, [October 2001 General Conference](#)

The Constitution under which we live, and which has not only blessed us but has become a model for other constitutions, is our God-inspired national safeguard ensuring freedom and liberty, justice and equality before the law.
-Gordon B. Hinckley, [October 2001 General Conference](#)

I testify that America is a choice land. God raised up the founding fathers of the United States of America and established the inspired Constitution. This was the required prologue for the restoration of the gospel. America will be a blessed land unto the righteous forever and is the base from which God will continue to direct the worldwide Latter-day operations of His kingdom.
-Ezra Taft Benson, *Stand Up for Freedom*, p. 201

It is a love of liberty which inspires my soul—civil and religious liberty to the whole of the human race.
-Joseph Smith, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), p. 345

In a free and open society such as ours, a well-rounded education is an essential for the preservation of freedom against the chicanery and demagoguery of aspiring tyrants who would have us ignorantly vote ourselves into bondage.
-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 229

No people can maintain freedom unless their political institutions are founded upon faith in God and belief in the existence of moral law. God has endowed men with certain unalienable rights and no legislature and no majority, however great, may morally limit or destroy these. *The function of government is to protect life, liberty and property and anything more or less than this is usurpation and oppression.*
-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 4

Character must become important in this country again. The old essentials of honesty, self-respect, loyalty, support for law and order, must be taught the younger generation.
-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 11

...[L]et those who call for unity and the elimination of hate be sure they are not merely trying to silence the friends of freedom.
-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 37

As American citizens who love freedom, we must return to a respect for national morality – respect for law and order. There is no other way of safety for us and our posterity. The hour is late, the time is short. We must begin now, in earnest, and invite God’s blessings on our efforts.
-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 13

The United States of America has been – and still is – a great nation. *It has been great because it has been free.* It has been free because it has trusted in God, and was founded upon the principles of freedom that are set forth in the Word of God. This nation has a spiritual foundation.
-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 113-114

You see, at the time [Satan] was cast out of heaven, his objective was (and still is) “to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will.” This he effectively does to as many as will not hearken unto the voice of God. His main attack is still on free agency. When he can get men to yield their agency, he has them well on the way to captivity.

-Marion G. Romney, [Conference Report, October 1960, p. 75](#)

It is imperative that American citizens become alerted and informed regarding the threat to our welfare, happiness, and freedom. No American is worthy of citizenship in this great land who refuses to take an active interest in these matters. All we hold dear as a great Christian nation is at stake.

-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 31

The Lord does not always give reasons for each commandment. Sometimes faithful members, like Adam of old, are called upon to obey an injunction of the Lord even though they do not know the reason why it was given. Those who trust in God will obey him, knowing full well that time will provide the reasons and vindicate their obedience.

-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 190

It is our duty to be faithful, and a man cannot be counted among the fully faithful unless he is an active fighter for freedom. Resistance to tyranny is still obedience to God.

-Ezra Taft Benson, *Stand Up for Freedom*, p. 195

The blessings far outweigh the burden when we stand up for freedom. With gall comes glory; with a cross comes a crown; with thorns comes a throne, if we will persevere in righteousness.

-Ezra Taft Benson, *Stand Up for Freedom*, p. 195-196

“...and the day cometh that they who will not hear the voice of the Lord, neither the voice of his servants, neither give heed to the words of the prophets and apostles, shall be cut off from among the people;

“For they have strayed from mine ordinances, and have broken mine everlasting covenant;

“They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own God, whose image is in the likeness of the world.” ...

These warnings were given 140 years ago. The fulfillment is now. We are living witnesses, unless we are blinded by our own complacency and the craftiness of evil men.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [April 1973 General Conference](#)

In times as serious as these, we must not permit fear of criticism to keep us from doing our duty, even at the risk of our counsel being tabbed as political, as government becomes more and more entwined in our daily lives.

In the crisis through which we are now passing, we have been fully warned. This has brought forth some criticism. There are some of us who do not want to hear the message. It embarrasses us. The things which are threatening our lives, our welfare, our freedoms are the very things some of us have been condoning. Many do not want to be disturbed as they continue to enjoy their comfortable complacency.
-Ezra Taft Benson, [April 1973 General Conference](#)

The Church is founded on eternal truth. We do not compromise principle. We do not surrender our standards regardless of current trends or pressures. Our allegiance to truth as a church is unwavering.
-Ezra Taft Benson, [April 1973 General Conference](#)

Speaking out against immoral or unjust actions has been the burden of prophets and disciples of God from time immemorial. It was for this very reason that many of them were persecuted. Nevertheless, it was their God-given task, as watchmen on the tower, to warn the people.
-Ezra Taft Benson, [April 1973 General Conference](#)

We live in an age of appeasement—the sacrificing of principle. Appeasement is not the answer. It is never the right answer.
-Ezra Taft Benson, [April 1973 General Conference](#)

Tolerance is not conformity to the world's view and practices. *We must not surrender our beliefs to get along with people*, however beloved or influential they may be. Too high a price may be paid for social standing or even for harmony... The Gospel rests upon eternal truth; and truth can never be deserted safely.
-John A. Widtsoe, [Conference Report, April 1941, p. 116](#)

The United States of America has been great because it has been free. It has been free because it has trusted in God and was founded upon the principles of freedom set forth in the word of God. *This nation has a spiritual foundation*. To me, this land has a prophetic history.
-Ezra Taft Benson, [April 1973 General Conference](#)

How strong is our will to remain free—to be good? False thinking and false ideologies, dressed in the most pleasing forms, quietly—almost without our knowing it—seek to reduce our moral defenses and to

captivate our minds. They entice with bright promises of security, cradle-to-grave guarantees of many kinds. They masquerade under various names, but all may be recognized by one thing—one thing they all have in common: to erode away character and man's freedom to think and act for himself.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [April 1973 General Conference](#)

Effort will be made to lull us away into a false security. Proposals will be and are being offered and programs sponsored that have wide appeal. Attractive labels are usually attached to the most dangerous programs, often in the name of public welfare and personal security. Again, let us not be misled.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [April 1973 General Conference](#)

Freedom can be killed by neglect as well as by direct attack. Too long have too many Americans, and people of the free world generally, stood by as silent accessories to the crimes of assault against freedom—assault against basic economic and spiritual principles and traditions that have made nations strong.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [April 1973 General Conference](#)

Let us strive for progress down the road of goodness and freedom. With the help and blessings of the Lord, the free people of the United States and the free world can and will face tomorrow without fear, without doubt, and with full confidence.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [April 1973 General Conference](#)

The lessons of history, many of them very sobering, ought to be turned to during this hour of our great achievements, because during the hour of our success is our greatest danger. Even during the hour of our great prosperity, a nation may sow the seeds of its own destruction. History reveals that rarely is a great civilization conquered from without unless it has weakened or destroyed itself within.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [April 1973 General Conference](#)

As American citizens, as citizens of the nations of the free world, we need to rouse ourselves to the problems which confront us as great Christian nations. We must recognize that these fundamental, basic principles—moral and spiritual—lay at the very foundation of our past achievements. To continue to enjoy present blessings, we must return to these basic and fundamental principles. Economics and morals are both part of one inseparable body of truth. They must be in harmony. We need to square our actions with these eternal verities.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [April 1973 General Conference](#)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints stands firm in support of the great spiritual and moral principles which have been the basic traditions of the free world. We oppose every evil effort to downgrade or challenge the eternal verities which have undergirded civilization from the beginning.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [April 1973 General Conference](#)

In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, chastity will never be out of date. We have one standard for men and women, and that standard is moral purity. We oppose and abhor the damnable practice of wholesale abortion and every other unholy and impure act which strikes at the very foundation of the home and family, our most basic institutions. A continuation of these immoral practices will surely bring down the wrath and judgments of the Almighty.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [April 1973 General Conference](#)

In our concentration upon materialism and material acquisitions, are we forgetting the spiritual basis upon which our prosperity, security, and freedom rest? God help us to repent of our evil ways and humble ourselves before the offended power.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [April 1973 General Conference](#)

There is great safety in a nation on its knees.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [April 1973 General Conference](#)

What assurance it would give of the much-needed blessings of the Lord if the American people, and people everywhere, could all be found daily—night and morning—on their knees expressing gratitude for blessings already received, acknowledging our dependence upon God, and seeking his divine guidance.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [April 1973 General Conference](#)

The spectacle of a nation praying is more awe-inspiring, more powerful, than the explosion of an atomic bomb. The force of prayer is greater than any possible combination of man-controlled powers, because “prayer is man’s greatest means of tapping the resources of God.” The Founding Fathers accept this eternal verity. Do we?

-Ezra Taft Benson, [April 1973 General Conference](#)

God help us, as free men, to recognize the source of our blessings, the threat to our freedom and our moral and spiritual standards, and the need for humble, yet courageous, action to preserve these priceless, time-tested blessings, I humbly pray.

- Ezra Taft Benson, [April 1973 General Conference](#)

Preach that the plan of salvation involves the belief that governments were instituted of God for the benefit of man. Man was not born for the benefit of the state. Preach that no government can exist in peace, and I quote from the Doctrine and Covenants, "except such laws are framed and held inviolate as will secure to each individual the free exercise of conscience, the right and control of property, and the protection of life" (D&C 134:2).

-David O. McKay, [Conference Report, October 1966, p. 7](#)

We must rally all the support we can to strengthen and protect our faiths, families, and freedoms.

-M. Russell Ballard, [World Congress of Families, 10/27/15](#)

Could many of our ills today have resulted from our failure to train a strong citizenry from the only source we have – the boys and girls of each community? Have they grown up to believe in...

Politics without principle

Pleasure without conscience

Knowledge without effort

Wealth without work

Business without morality

Science without humanity

Worship without sacrifice

-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 10

The facts are clear. *Our problem centers in Washington, D.C.* And this applies to the administration of both political parties. In the words of James Madison, "Since the general civilization of mankind, I believe there are more instances of the abridgment of freedom of the people by gradual and silent encroachments of those in power, than by violent and sudden usurpations."

-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 9

If those who oppose us are genuine in their commitment to the values of diversity and equality, we should be able to work together to find compassion and peace. Forcing the beliefs of one onto another ... diminishes diversity and skews the scales of equality. By engaging in compromise and extending love to all of God's children, who are our brothers and sisters, we can create a peaceful, diverse tapestry of ideals and beliefs.

-M. Russell Ballard, [World Congress of Families, 10/27/15](#)

[W]e cannot and should not shun those who look or think or act differently than we do. We demonstrate our best humanity when we show love and kindness to all of God's children. We demonstrate our discipleship when we refuse strident tones, when we refuse derisive labels, and when we enter the public square seeking fair outcomes through understanding and mutual respect.

-M. Russell Ballard, [World Congress of Families, 10/27/15](#)

Even as we seek to be meek and to avoid contention, we must not compromise or dilute our commitment to the truths we understand. We must not surrender our positions or our values.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [October 2014 General Conference](#)

The gospel of Jesus Christ and the covenants we have made inevitably cast us as combatants in the eternal contest between truth and error. There is no middle ground in that contest.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [October 2014 General Conference](#)

Our stands and communications on controversial topics should not be contentious. We should be wise in explaining and pursuing our positions and in exercising our influence. In doing so, we ask that others not be offended by our sincere religious beliefs and the free exercise of our religion.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [October 2014 General Conference](#)

I pray with an earnest heart, God keep you away from the base, scheming plans of him who enthrones passion, who decries self-control, who renounces the sacredness of the family, and who, in the words of the communist, Marx himself, would “dethrone God.”

-David O. McKay, [Conference Report, April 1966, p. 108](#)

Church members are at perfect liberty to act according to their own consciences in the matter of safeguarding our way of life. They are, of course, encouraged to honor the highest standards of the gospel and to work to preserve their own freedoms. They are free to participate in non-church meetings that are held to warn people of the threat of Communism or any other theory or principle that will deprive us of our free agency or individual liberties vouchsafed by the Constitution of the United States.

-David O. McKay, [Conference Report, April 1966, p. 109](#)

Our immediate concern ... is not with parties, groups, or persons, but with principles. We therefore commend and encourage every person and every group who is sincerely seeking to study Constitutional principles and awaken a sleeping and apathetic people to the alarming conditions that are rapidly advancing about us.

-David O. McKay, [Conference Report, April 1966, p. 109](#)

The position of this Church on the subject of communism has never changed. We consider it the greatest satanical threat to peace, prosperity, and the spread of God's work among men that exists on the face of the earth.

-David O. McKay, [Conference Report, April 1966, p. 109](#)

While most Americans continue to enjoy their comfortable complacency, the fact remains that the American way of life, with a spiritual foundation which has given us the highest standard of living and more of the good things of life than any other civilization, is under powerful attack. The most prominent targets now under withering fire in this war against ourselves is the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, the Constitution of the United States, the institution of private property, and the youth of America. Surely this is a time when consideration might well be given by the people of America to the important matter of citizenship responsibility in this blessed land.

-Ezra Taft Benson, ["The American Challenge," BYU, 4/21/70](#)

The right of choice – free agency – runs like a golden thread throughout the gospel plan of the Lord for the blessing of his children.

-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 324

We are deaf today to the approach of tyranny because we have lived so long under the protection of the Constitution that we take for granted the blessings of liberty.

-J. Reuben Clark, Jr., *Stand Fast by Our Constitution*, p. 4

Place more emphasis upon the glorious achievements and traditions of our American heritage. World consciousness and international understanding are fine, but they should not blind us to the fact that in our own country we really *do* have something better than anywhere else, and we shouldn't be ashamed to say so – least of all to our youth.

-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 233

...[T]he Constitution of the United States is a great and treasured part of my religion, and the revelations of the Lord and the words of our inspired leaders compel it to be so. The overturning, or the material changing, or the distortion of any fundamental principle of our constitutional government would thus do violence to my religion.

-J. Reuben Clark, Jr., *Stand Fast by Our Constitution*, p. 7

Why have prophets of God been commanded to proclaim liberty and lead the battle to preserve freedom? Because freedom is basic to the great plan of the Lord. The gospel can prosper only in an atmosphere of freedom. This fact is confirmed by history, as well as by sacred scriptures.

-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 324

...[W]e have also the word of God, direct and through His prophets, giving us His promises regarding this land and this government, and the conditions upon which these promises are based. The world does not believe these, but the Lord has given to us the testimony of their truth and reality.

God has never changed or modified or withdrawn one whit of his promises or their conditions. This we must always and poignantly remember.

-J. Reuben Clark, Jr., *Stand Fast by Our Constitution*, p. 34

We need more people today with strong convictions in support of the Constitution and with courage to stand back of their convictions. We need men with courage to refuse support to every effort aimed at undermining the Constitution.

-J. Reuben Clark, Jr., *Stand Fast by Our Constitution*, p. 4

Sex education belongs in the home, where parents can teach chastity in a spiritual environment as they reveal the facts of life to their children.

-Mark E. Petersen, [Conference Report, April 1969, p. 64](#)

As people change their standards of right and wrong, they begin to suppose that what was sin a generation ago is no longer so, that standards are relative things that may be altered at will through usage and desire, and that old-fashioned goodness now has turned into priggishness.

-Mark E. Petersen, [Conference Report, April 1969, p. 62](#)

The time is fast approaching when it will require great courage for Latter-day Saints to stand up for their peculiar standards and doctrine – all of their doctrine, including the more weighty principles such as the principle of freedom.

-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, pp. 281-282

“...they have all gone astray, save it be a few, who are the humble followers of Christ; nevertheless, they are led, that in many instances they do err because they are taught by the precepts of men” (2 Nephi 28:14).

May we cherish God's revelations more than man's reasoning and choose to follow the prophets of the Lord rather than the precepts of men is my humble prayer.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1969, p. 15](#)

The Constitution of the United States was ratified in 1789. The priesthood of God was restored in 1829. Between those two dates is an interval of forty years. It is my conviction that God, who knows the end from the beginning, provided that period of time so the new nation could grow in strength to protect the land of Zion.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [October 1979 General Conference](#)

Communism introduced into the world a substitute for true religion. It is a counterfeit of the gospel plan. The false prophets of Communism predict a utopian society. This, they proclaim, will only be brought about as capitalism and free enterprise are overthrown, private property abolished, the family as a social unit eliminated, all classes abolished, all governments overthrown, and a communal ownership of property in a classless, stateless society established.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [October 1979 General Conference](#)

I say with all the energy of my soul that unless we as citizens of this nation forsake our sins, political and otherwise, and return to the fundamental principles of Christianity and of constitutional government, we will lose our political liberties, our free institutions, and will stand in jeopardy before God.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [October 1979 General Conference](#)

God must ever have a free people to prosper His work and bring about Zion.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [October 1979 General Conference](#)

I want to publicly profess my opposition to those who are so caught up in their own learning they believe with their enlightened minds they can change the laws of God. A consensus of mankind is not and never will be empowered to change these divine laws.

-L. Tom Perry, [October 1975 General Conference](#)

How I wish every American and every living soul would read the Book of Mormon. I testify to you that it is true. It tells about the prophetic history and mission of America. It gives the comforting assurance that God has kept this great nation, as it were, in the hollow of his hand in preparation for its great mission.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1962, p. 103](#)

This [country] then becomes the Lord's base of operations in these latter days. And this base will not be shifted out of its place – the land of America. This nation will, in a measure at least, fulfil its mission even though it may face serious and troublesome days. The degree to which it achieves its full mission depends upon the righteousness of its people.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1962, p. 104](#)

Yes, we are afraid to live righteously according to eternal principles – economic, moral, and spiritual. This is our danger. We must never forget that nations may – and usually do – sow the seeds of their own destruction while enjoying unprecedented prosperity.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1962, p. 105](#)

God has, through his power, established a free people in this land as a means of helping to carry forward his purposes.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1962, p. 104](#)

A corollary to the pernicious falsehood that God is dead is the equally pernicious doctrine that there is no devil. Satan himself is the father of both of these lies. To believe them is to surrender to him. Such surrender has always led, is leading now, and will continue to lead men to destruction.

-Marion G. Romney, [April 1971 General Conference](#)

We know that there is available to each of us the gift of the Holy Ghost—the power of revelation which embraces the gift of discernment by which we may unerringly detect the devil and the counterfeits he is so successfully foisting upon this gullible generation.

-Marion G. Romney, [April 1971 General Conference](#)

Our course is clear and certain. It is to strictly obey the commandments of the Lord, as they are recorded in the scriptures and as they are being given by the living prophets.

-Marion G. Romney, [April 1971 General Conference](#)

While we teach sex in schools and publicly portray the vilest of filth on the movie screen, we virtually make a criminal of a schoolteacher who would bring a Bible into the classroom or who might ask the students to recite the Lord's Prayer. So far have we lost our sense of values!

-Mark E. Petersen, [April 1971 General Conference](#)

How true it is that “first we pity, then endure, then embrace” the repeated and relentless incursions of iniquity.

-Mark E. Petersen, [April 1971 General Conference](#)

Are we any better than the civilizations which preceded us here and which were swept away because of iniquity? Those civilizations were taught a stern lesson pertaining to their occupancy of this hemisphere.

They were told that this is a land of special significance to the Almighty and that only those nations which serve God may remain here. We of today must heed this warning if we ourselves are to survive.

-Mark E. Petersen, [April 1971 General Conference](#)

We do not say that sin in other parts of the world is less reprehensible or to be excused in the least degree, for sin is always sin regardless of the philosophies of men and no matter where it appears.

But in this hemisphere a different situation exists. God has dedicated this land to the work of his Beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he will not tolerate continued desecration of it.

-Mark E. Petersen, [April 1971 General Conference](#)

How long will the Almighty be patient as we ignore or defy him? Shall we comfort ourselves by accepting the philosophy which says that there is no God, that the Bible is but a myth, that the Book of Mormon is not true, and that therefore repentance is unnecessary?

We testify to you that God does live, that he is the eternal judge of all mankind, and that each one of us must face the record of our own deeds on his judgment day.

-Mark E. Petersen, [April 1971 General Conference](#)

The Church must not compromise standards before popular demands.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [October 1971 General Conference](#)

There must needs be opposition in all things. Freedom of choice is a God-given eternal principle. To escape Satan’s snares and booby traps by following the Lord is our assignment. It is not an easy one.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [October 1971 General Conference](#)

With God’s help the light of high resolve in the eyes of the American people must never be dimmed! Our freedom must – and will – be preserved.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1958, p. 101](#)

Church members, both men and women, should not hesitate, if they desire, to run for public office at any level of government, wherever they live. Our voices are essential today and important in our schools, our cities, our countries where democracy exists.

-M. Russell Ballard, [April 2018 General Conference](#)

God bless us in our stewardship. May we be at least as valiant for freedom and righteousness, here and now, as we were when we fought for these principles in the pre-existence.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1963, p. 113](#)

There always comes a time when unpleasant truths must be retold, even though the retelling disturbs the ease and quiet of a luxurious error. Today seems to be such a time. On such occasions, the criticism, slander, misrepresentation that one gets, are of no consequence.

-J. Reuben Clark, Address to the Utah Woolgrowers Assn., 1/24/45

Quoted by Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1963, p. 111](#)

Men receive blessings by obedience to God's law. And without obedience there is no blessing. Before the final triumphal return of the Lord, the question as to whether we may save our Constitutional Republic is simply based on two factors – the number of patriots and the extent of their obedience.

That the Lord desires to save this nation which he raised up there is no doubt. But that he leaves it up to us, with his help, is the awful reality.

-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 55

To the patriots I say this: *Take that long eternal look. Stand up for freedom, no matter what the cost.* It can help to save your soul – and maybe your country.

-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 45

One of our most serious problems is the inferiority complex which people feel when they are not informed and organized. They dare not make a decision on these vital issues. They let other people think for them. They stumble around in the middle of the road to avoid being “controversial” and get hit by the traffic going both ways.

-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 44-45

A man must not only stand for the right principles, but he must fight for them. And let me at this time salute those valiant patriots who have banded together in well-structured organizations with an

intelligent program, and who are courageously acting to preserve and to restore and safeguard our inspired Constitution. They can be proud of the friends they've gained and the enemies they've earned.
-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 58

An ounce of energy in the preservation of freedom is worth a ton of effort to get it back once it is lost.
-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 57

No one can delegate his duty to preserve his freedom, for the price of liberty is still eternal vigilance.
-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 57

Thank God for family, for country and for the knowledge I have that God lives, that he hears and answers prayer and that he loves his children everywhere and that he loves this great nation, America, established by men whom he inspired for that very purpose.
-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 47

...[W]hen a man stands for freedom he stands with God. And as long as he stands for freedom he stands with God. And were he to stand alone he would still stand with God – the best company and the greatest power in or out of this world.
-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 54

Our complacency as a nation is shocking – yes, almost unbelievable! ...We are busy making money, enjoying our abundance but oblivious to the gradual loss of our freedom which has made all of these blessings possible. As a nation we are affluent but foolish.
-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 50-51

We are going through what J. Reuben Clark once termed the greatest propaganda campaign of all time. We cannot believe all we read, and what we can believe is not all of the same value. We must sift. We must learn by study and prayer... When your freedom is at stake, your information had best be accurate.
-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 58-59

We must discharge responsibilities not only to our church, home and profession, but also to our country. Otherwise we do not merit the full blessings of a kind Providence.
-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 61

[A] basic principle we must understand is that people are superior to the governments they form. Since God created people with certain inalienable rights, and they, in turn, created government to help secure and safeguard those rights, it follows that the people are superior to the creature they created.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [BYU, 9/16/86](#)

We must make our influence felt by our vote, our letters, and our advice. We must be wisely informed and let others know how we feel.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [BYU, 9/16/86](#)

As citizens, Church members are encouraged to participate in political and governmental affairs, including involvement in the political party of their choice. Members are also urged to be actively engaged in worthy causes to improve their communities and make them wholesome places in which to live and rear families.

-Handbook 2: Administering in the Church (21.1.29)

Members are encouraged to support measures that strengthen the moral fabric of society, particularly those designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society.

-Handbook 2: Administering in the Church (21.1.29)

The powers of the people granted to the three branches of government were specifically limited. The Founding Fathers well understood human nature and its tendency to exercise unrighteous dominion when given authority. A constitution was therefore designed to limit government to certain enumerated functions, beyond which was tyranny.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [BYU, 9/16/86](#)

We must become involved in civic affairs. As citizens of this republic, we cannot do our duty and be idle spectators.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [BYU, 9/16/86](#)

(Speaking of the Book of Mormon): No other written testament so clearly illustrates the fact that when men and nations walk in the fear of God and in obedience to his commandments, they prosper and grow, but when they disregard him and his word, there comes a decay that, unless arrested by righteousness, leads to impotence and death. The Book of Mormon is an affirmation of the Old Testament proverb, "Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34).

-Gordon B. Hinckley, [October 1979 General Conference](#)

[The Book of Mormon]’s narrative is a chronicle of nations long since gone. But in its descriptions of the problems of today’s society, it is as current as the morning newspaper and much more definitive, inspired, and inspiring concerning the solutions of those problems.

-Gordon B. Hinckley, [October 1979 General Conference](#)

It is high time we awakened to the dangers of excessive government in business, in education, in agriculture, and other segments of our economy. It is time we realized the perils of too great a centralization of power, and too much dependence on public agencies. We must stand up and be counted.

-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 19

The history of all mankind shows very clearly that if we would be free – and if we would stay free – we must stand eternal watch against the accumulation of too much power in government.

-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 22

The truth is that the federal government has no funds which it does not first, in some manner, take from the people. A dollar cannot make the round trip to Washington and back without shrinking in the process. As taxpayers we need to recognize these facts; programs which obscure them are contrary to the public interest.

The thought that the federal government is wealthy and the states poverty-stricken is a dangerous illusion. The federal debt in the United States is now sixteen times as great as the combined debt of the fifty states. It is difficult for the states to make a strong case for assistance from the federal government when anything the federal government spends must come from the states.

-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 23

I cannot sing “America” without tears coming to my eyes and without chills running up and down my back. When I stand with my hand over my heart and sing our national anthem, I’m so proud I can hardly stand it. When I think of all the noble men who gave their lives for this land, then I feel a sacred resolve well up within me and I know that we must stand fast.

-Vaughn J. Featherstone, [October 1975 General Conference](#)

We need to feel again what it means to be a citizen of the United States of America. We need to feel the thrill and sensation and have the swellings within our bosom about this country. The priesthood of God should be an example of patriotism and loyalty to our country.

-Vaughn J. Featherstone, [October 1975 General Conference](#)

What a wonderful heritage we could leave to our youth if we could just kindle in them the fires of freedom that our fathers kindled in us. I love this great land; I honor the great founding fathers; I'm proud to be an American.

-Vaughn J. Featherstone, [October 1975 General Conference](#)

We are the nation's watchmen—no other people collectively love the Constitution and honor it and hold it as a divinely inspired document as do the Latter-day Saints.

-Vaughn J. Featherstone, [October 1975 General Conference](#)

As a generation of those who love this glorious country, we must ask ourselves, "But watchman, what of the night?" Have our youth enough of the fires of freedom kindled in them to withstand the darkness? *We must teach them in our homes, churches, and schools.* The sound must go across this land from one end to the other.

-Vaughn J. Featherstone, [October 1975 General Conference](#)

I bear my solemn and sacred witness that the United States of America is the greatest nation on the face of the earth. We ought to love it and we ought to talk about it. We need to be true, we need to have faith. If we do this, God will give us strength to brace against the winds. He will make this country like a giant pillar of granite. He will make us a mighty people, a pure people, a Christlike people, a worthy people, a free people.

-Vaughn J. Featherstone, [October 1975 General Conference](#)

[T]he Book of Mormon is a record of God's dealings with people who had problems similar to the problems we have in this day. And they were a great people who loved this land and thus we find the course we must take in following in their footsteps.

-Vaughn J. Featherstone, [October 1975 General Conference](#)

We believe that governments were instituted of God for the benefit of man; and that he holds men accountable for their acts in relation to them, both in making laws and administering them, for the good and safety of society.

-D&C 134:1

We believe that no government can exist in peace, except such laws are framed and held inviolate as will secure to each individual the free exercise of conscience, the right and control of property, and the protection of life.

-D&C 134:2

It is most important that all citizens be informed in matters of government; that they know and understand the laws of the land; and that they take an active part wherever possible in choosing and electing honest and wise men to administer the affairs of government.

-N. Eldon Tanner, [October 1975 General Conference](#)

No constitution on earth has endured longer than this one. We seek, and usually find, the answers to today's questions in this document of yesterday. It was and is a miracle.

-N. Eldon Tanner, [April 1976 General Conference](#)

We believe that the Constitution was brought about by God to ensure a nation where liberty could abound and where his gospel could flourish.

-N. Eldon Tanner, [April 1976 General Conference](#)

How can we best show our appreciation to God for these marvelous blessings of freedom, of a place where his true and everlasting gospel was restored, of the preparation and divine guidance in every event leading to that most significant event? We must remember what the Lord told the Jaredites when they were first brought to this land: "Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, *if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ*, who hath been manifested by the things which we have written" (Ether 2:12; italics added).

-N. Eldon Tanner, [April 1976 General Conference](#)

We are all a part of America's future. Our job is to learn and benefit from the past and to go forward in righteousness, keeping the commandments of God. In this connection the prophet Lehi said, "Wherefore, this land is consecrated unto him whom he shall bring. And if it so be that they shall serve him according to the commandments which he hath given, it shall be a land of liberty unto them; wherefore, they shall never be brought down into captivity; if so, it shall be because of iniquity; for if iniquity shall abound cursed shall be the land for their sakes, but unto the righteous it shall be blessed forever" (2 Nephi 1:7).

-N. Eldon Tanner, [April 1976 General Conference](#)

[I]t is our duty to seek diligently for and support and uphold good, honest, honorable, and wise representatives to govern us.

-N. Eldon Tanner, [April 1976 General Conference](#)

I feel authorized to say, here this afternoon, that these liberties which have come to men, both religious and civil, have not been established by the Lord to be destroyed, but that they are here to remain until liberty shall prevail from the rivers to the ends of the earth, until God's kingdom shall be established among men, and his will done upon earth as it is done in heaven.

-Anthony W. Ivins, [Conference Report, April 1917, p. 54-55](#)

Only as we accept and live the teachings of the gospel can the destiny which God planned for America be realized and the world united in peace and brotherhood.

-N. Eldon Tanner, [April 1976 General Conference](#)

I suggest to you that if we were spiritually sound, if we were living the teachings of Jesus Christ, whom we *must* serve if we are to survive as individuals and nations, then the political and economic problems already would be solved, because by living the Ten Commandments and other teachings of God we could all live together in peace and prosperity.

-N. Eldon Tanner, [April 1971 General Conference](#)

If we are to save ourselves, our families, and our country, we must, as Peter taught, repent, be baptized, change our ways, and turn and serve the Lord and keep his commandments. The responsibility rests on us as individuals. We need a spiritual renaissance.

-N. Eldon Tanner, [April 1971 General Conference](#)

Now may I offer an important note of caution. An erroneous assumption could be made that if a little of something is good, a lot must be better. Not so! Overdoses of needed medication can be toxic. Boundless mercy could oppose justice. So tolerance, without limit, could lead to spineless permissiveness.

The Lord drew boundary lines to define acceptable limits of tolerance. Danger rises when those divine limits are disobeyed.

-Russell M. Nelson, [April 1994 General Conference](#)

The mere making of laws, even in an absolute despotism, does not change the great laws of nature and economics ... for there can be no permanent stability where men are not free.

-J. Reuben Clark, *Stand Fast By Our Constitution*, p. 141

Because our nation is a creation of heaven, and because it has a divine destiny, we Americans must learn that it can continue to exist only as it aligns itself with the powers of heaven. If we turn our back

upon the Almighty, even by ignoring him, we jeopardize our national future. If we deliberately oppose his purposes, we place ourselves in danger of destruction.

-Mark E. Petersen, [Conference Report, April 1968, p. 59](#)

[George Washington] realized and he publicly announced that we obtained our independence through an act of Providence, since we were far too weak to gain it by ourselves. Knowing this, he warned that if we are to survive as a free and independent nation, we must obey the Almighty God who brought us into being.

-Mark E. Petersen, [Conference Report, April 1968, p. 59](#)

Because of our love of wealth and prestige and our insatiable passion for ease and pleasure, we fail to take the essential spiritual steps which could and would preserve us. Everyone—every man on the street—knows that we cannot continue with present conditions as they are, and yet we seem not to have the desire or the courage to alter our course.

-Mark E. Petersen, [Conference Report, April 1968, p. 60](#)

Lincoln said that if we as a people do not turn to God and serve him, our nation will drift into destruction. He expressed his meaning in these words: "If we do not do right, God will let us go our own way to ruin. If we do right, he will lead us safely out of this wilderness and crown our arms with victory." Thereupon he summoned America to turn to God as the only means of survival.

-Mark E. Petersen, [Conference Report, April 1968, p. 60](#)

Atheism is the cause of most of our ills. If we were realistic about our present plight, we would admit that atheism in its many forms is our greatest enemy, whether it be in abandoning God for pleasure and money, or in yielding to philosophical meanderings, or in surrendering to those forces which break down family life, destroy free government, seduce the masses, and spawn hate and war.

Are we not intelligent enough to perceive that shocking fact?

-Mark E. Petersen, [Conference Report, April 1968, p. 60](#)

Our situation in America is not merely a case of fighting the encroachments of seditious influences. It is not only a matter of legislating against crime. Neither is it one of changing our Constitution because some misguided individuals think it is obsolete... We are confronted with the choice of whether or not we as a nation will return to God in spirit and in truth as a means of actual survival.

-Mark E. Petersen, [Conference Report, April 1968, p. 61](#)

Oh, America, turn to God. But do not give him mere lip service. Obey him with all your hearts, might, mind, and strength.

-Mark E. Petersen, [Conference Report, April 1968, p. 62](#)

The destiny of America can be realized and the work of the Lord can be accomplished only through the exercising of the guarantees given us in the Constitution of the United States.

-ElRay L. Christiansen, [Conference Report, October 1967, p. 138](#)

Doubtless in all the world there is no document to compare with this "heavenly banner," this "glorious standard," the Constitution of the United States!

-ElRay L. Christiansen, [Conference Report, October 1967, p. 139](#)

[I]n any society, *good government* can be had only if administered by *good men*, selected by *good citizens*.

To be a good citizen, we should learn for ourselves what is set forth in the constitution. This knowledge can be obtained only through individual study of the document itself. We must not only study it, but we must also guard it. It was Daniel Webster who uttered these prophetic words: "Watchful guardianship over the Constitution is the proper means for its support."

-ElRay L. Christiansen, [Conference Report, October 1967, p. 139](#)

In addition to the love of God and the love of our neighbor, and, as Jesus said, the love of our enemies, there should be found in each of us a love of our country and of the constitution which binds it together.

-ElRay L. Christiansen, [Conference Report, October 1967, p. 139](#)

Like the patriots of old who, under extreme difficulties and discouragements, hammered out our constitution, may we say of that inspired document: "And for the support of this with a firm reliance upon the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our, fortunes, and our sacred honor."

-ElRay L. Christiansen, [Conference Report, October 1967, pp. 139-40](#)

It is the obligation of parents to acquaint their children with this great document [the Constitution] that they may have understanding of and appreciation for the principles that make their liberty and freedom possible.

-ElRay L. Christiansen, [Conference Report, October 1967, p. 139](#)

[Our children] must be made to recognize and resist the constantly fomented ideologies that threaten the very life of our republic, the *individual* liberties of our people, and the God-given heritage of freedom. One of the greatest contributions of a free people is to transmit that freedom to their children.

-ElRay L. Christiansen, [Conference Report, October 1967, p. 139](#)

Nearly two hundred years ago, some inspired men walked this land of America—not perfect men, but men raised up by the Perfect Man to perform a great work. Foreordained were they, to lay the foundation of this republic, the Lord's base of operations in these latter days. Blessed by the Almighty in their struggle for liberty and independence, the power of heaven rested on these founders as they drafted that great document for governing men, the Constitution of the United States.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1967, p. 59](#)

Freedom is a law of God, an eternal law. And, like any of God's laws, men cannot break it with impunity. They can only break themselves upon it. So when a man stands for freedom, he stands with God. And as long as he stands for freedom, he stands with God. Therefore, any man will be eternally vindicated and rewarded who stands for freedom.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1967, p. 59](#)

The Lord is displeased with wickedness, and he will help those who oppose it. But he has given all of us freedom to choose, while reserving for himself our final judgment. And herein lies the hope of all Christian constitutionalists. Why? Because the fight for freedom is God's fight. For free agency is an eternal principle.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1967, p. 59](#)

Certainly spirituality is the foundation upon which any battle against sin and tyranny must be waged. And because this is basically the struggle of the forces of Christ versus Antichrist, it is imperative that our people be in tune with the supreme leader of freedom, the Lord our God. And men only stay in tune when their lives are in harmony with God, for apart from God we cannot succeed, but as a partner with God, we cannot fail.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1967, p. 60](#)

Today you cannot effectively fight for freedom and not be attacked, and those who think they can are deceiving themselves. While I do not believe in stepping out of the path of duty to pick up a cross I do not need, a man is a coward who refuses to pick up a cross that clearly lies within his path.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1967, p. 61](#)

Those who hesitate to get into this fight [for freedom] because it is controversial fail to realize that life's decisions should be based on principles, not on Gallup polls.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1967, p. 62](#)

The basic purpose of life is to prove ourselves, not to be with the majority when it is wrong. Those who hesitate to get into the fight for freedom because they're not sure if we're going to win fail to realize that we will win in the long run, and for good.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1967, p. 62](#)

This is still God's world. The forces of evil, working through some mortals, have made a mess of a good part of it. But it is still God's world. In due time when each of us has had a chance to prove himself—including whether or not we are going to stand up for freedom—God will interject himself, and the final and eternal victory shall be for free agency. And then shall those weak-willed souls on the sidelines and those who took the wrong but temporarily popular course lament their decisions.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1967, p. 62](#)

Let us get about our business, for any Christian constitutionalist who retreats from this battle jeopardizes his life here and hereafter. Seldom has so much responsibility hung on so few, so heavily; but our numbers are increasing, and we who have been warned have a responsibility to warn our neighbor.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1967, p. 62](#)

This is a glorious hour in which to live. Generations past and future will mark well our response to our awesome duty. There is a reason why we have been born in this day. Ours is the task to try to live and perpetuate the principles of the Christ and the Constitution in the face of tremendous odds. May we, with God's help have strength for the battle and fill our mission in honor for God, family, and country.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1967, p. 62](#)

Some influential voices even question the extent to which our constitution should protect the free exercise of religion, including the right to practice and preach religious principles.

This is a vital matter on which we who believe in a Supreme Being who has established absolute right and wrong in human behavior must unite to insist on our time-honored constitutional rights to exercise our religion, to vote our consciences on public issues, and to participate in elections and debates in the public square and in the halls of justice. In doing so we stand with angels.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU, 9/11/11](#)

[A]s defenders of the faith, believers can and must seek laws that will preserve religious freedom.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU, 9/11/11](#)

Tolerance is a virtue, but like all virtues, when exaggerated, it transforms itself into a vice. We need to be careful of the “tolerance trap” so that we are not swallowed up in it. The permissiveness afforded by the weakening of the laws of the land to tolerate legalized acts of immorality does not reduce the serious spiritual consequence that is the result of the violation of God’s law of chastity.

-Boyd K. Packer, [April 2013 General Conference](#)

An extreme definition of tolerance is now widespread that implicitly or explicitly endorses the right of every person to choose their own morality, even their own “truth,” as though morality and truth were mere matters of personal preference. This extreme tolerance culminates in a refusal to recognize any fixed standards or draw moral distinctions of any kind...

When tolerance is so inflated out of all proportions, it means the death of virtue, for the essence of morality is to draw clear distinctions between right and wrong. All virtue requires saying no firmly and courageously to all that is morally bankrupt.

-Bruce D. Porter, [Ensign, June 2011](#)

The word *tolerance* does not stand alone. It requires an object and a response to qualify it as a virtue...

Tolerance is often demanded but seldom returned. Beware of the word *tolerance*. It is a very unstable virtue.

-Boyd K. Packer, Ogden Institute of Religion, 11/16/08

As quoted by Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU, 9/11/11](#)

[W]e know that the existence of God and the existence of absolute truth are fundamental to life on this earth, whether they are believed or not. We also know that evil exists and that some things are simply, seriously, and everlastingly wrong. You whom I address shun evil and seek truth.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU, 9/11/11](#)

The philosophy of moral relativism, which holds that each person is free to choose for himself what is right and wrong, is becoming the unofficial creed for many in America and other Western nations. At the extreme level, evil acts that used to be localized and covered up like a boil are now legalized and paraded like a banner. Persuaded by this philosophy, many of the rising generation—youth and young adults—are caught up in self-serving pleasures, pagan painting and piercing of body parts, foul language, revealing attire, pornography, dishonesty, and degrading sexual indulgence.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU, 9/11/11](#)

[W]e who believe in God and the corollary truth of absolute right and wrong have the challenge of living in a godless and increasingly amoral world. In this circumstance, all of us—and especially you of the rising generation—have a duty to stand up and speak up to affirm that God exists and that there are absolute truths His commandments establish.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU, 9/11/11](#)

Persons who don't believe in God or in absolute truth in moral matters can see themselves as the most tolerant of persons. For them, almost anything goes. "You do your thing, and I'll do my thing" is the popular description. This belief system can tolerate almost any behavior and almost any persons. Unfortunately, some who believe in moral relativism seem to have difficulty tolerating those who insist that there is a God who should be respected and certain moral absolutes that should be observed.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU, 9/11/11](#)

Since followers of Jesus Christ are commanded to be a leaven—not to be taken out of the world, but to remain in it—we must seek tolerance from those who hate us for not being of the world. As part of this, we will sometimes need to challenge laws that would impair our freedom to practice our faiths, doing so in reliance on our constitutional rights to the free exercise of religion.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU, 9/11/11](#)

[F]or persons who believe in absolute truth, tolerance for behavior is like a two-sided coin. Tolerance, or respect, is on one side of the coin, but truth is always on the other. You cannot possess or use the coin of tolerance without being conscious of both sides.

Our Savior applied this principle. When He faced the woman taken in adultery, Jesus spoke the comforting words of tolerance: "Neither do I condemn thee." Then, as He sent her away, He spoke the commanding words of truth: "Go, and sin no more" (John 8:11). We should all be edified and strengthened by this example of speaking both tolerance and truth: kindness in the communication, but firmness in the truth.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU, 9/11/11](#)

My young friends, be strong... The face of sin today often wears the mask of tolerance. Do not be deceived; behind that facade is heartache, unhappiness, and pain. You know what is right and what is wrong, and no disguise, however appealing, can change that. The character of transgression remains the same.

-Thomas S. Monson, [April 2008 General Conference](#)

[B]elievers should not be deterred by the familiar charge that they are trying to legislate morality. Many areas of the law are based on Judeo-Christian morality and have been for centuries. Our civilization is based on morality and cannot exist without it. As John Adams declared: "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU, 9/11/11](#)

We must also stand shoulder to shoulder with other believers to preserve and strengthen the freedom to advocate and practice our religious beliefs, whatever they are. For this purpose we must walk together on the same path in order to secure our freedom to pursue our separate ways when that is necessary according to our separate beliefs. Guided by heaven in this righteous cause, our words will be sweet and find place in the hearts of many.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU, 9/11/11](#)

[W]hen believers seek to promote their positions in the public square, their methods and their advocacy should always be tolerant of the opinions and positions of others who do not share their beliefs. We should not add to the extremism that divides our society.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU, 9/11/11](#)

[S]ome have misunderstood the ban on establishing an official religion to mean that government should treat religion with skepticism, even hostility. Not so. The Supreme Court has said:

The Establishment Clause does not license government to treat religion and those who teach or practice it . . . as subversive of American ideals and therefore subject to unique disabilities.

And, contrary to what some say, a law does not become unconstitutional when it coincides with religious principles. Otherwise we couldn't have laws punishing murder and theft.

-D. Todd Christofferson, [Provo Freedom Festival, 6/26/16](#)

The other First Amendment right protecting religion forbids the government from enacting laws "prohibiting the free exercise" of religion. Notice the word *exercise*. It protects the right to "exercise" religion in our daily lives—not just to believe whatever we like or to worship privately in our homes and chapels, but to live openly and freely according to our faith as long as we respect the fundamental rights of others.

-D. Todd Christofferson, [Provo Freedom Festival, 6/26/16](#)

The right to exercise religion would be seriously diminished if we couldn't say what we believe. Fortunately, in common with all Americans, religious believers and organizations are entitled to the freedom of speech. Their right to speak on matters of public concern is beyond dispute. The Supreme Court has taught "that private - religious speech, far from being a First Amendment orphan, is as fully protected under the Free Speech Clause as secular private expression." Religious speech cannot be singled out for government suppression. Nor is there any question that churches and other religious organizations—not just individuals—hold the right of free speech too.

-D. Todd Christofferson, [Provo Freedom Festival, 6/26/16](#)

We use our freedom of religion and belief to establish our core convictions, without which all other human rights would be meaningless. How can we claim the freedom of speech without being able to say what we truly believe? How can we claim the freedom of assembly unless we can gather with others who share our ideals? How can we enjoy freedom of the press unless we can publicly print or post who we really are?

-D. Todd Christofferson, [“A Celebration of Religious Freedom,” Sao Paulo, Brazil, 4/29/15](#)

[R]eligious participation in public life is not only part of American history and a constitutionally protected freedom, it is also good for our nation. All laws and government policies are based on values—religious or otherwise. Everyone has a right to be heard—“to compete”—in the marketplaces of ideas and in influencing governmental decisions. To silence one voice potentially leads to silencing all others.

-D. Todd Christofferson, [Provo Freedom Festival, 6/26/16](#)

If you are a person of faith, you have a critical contribution to make to our country and society. Public discussions about the common good are enriched by men and women like you who routinely put duty above convenience and conscience above personal advantage.

-D. Todd Christofferson, [Provo Freedom Festival, 6/26/16](#)

Don’t be intimidated by those who claim that you are imposing your religious beliefs on others. In a pluralistic society, promoting one’s values for the good of society is not imposing them on others—it is putting them forward for consideration along with all others. Societies will choose and decide. Someone’s values will prevail in the end, and all of us have the right—and duty—to argue for what we believe will best serve the needs of the people and most benefit the common good.

-D. Todd Christofferson, [Provo Freedom Festival, 6/26/16](#)

My friends and fellow citizens, we live in challenging times. Religious freedom is indeed under fire. And things may get worse before they get better. But these are *our* times. This is *our* moment to defend our fundamental freedoms. With courage, conviction, and civility—drawing upon our noble heritage as Americans—each one of us can make a profound difference.

-D. Todd Christofferson, [Provo Freedom Festival, 6/26/16](#)

[W]henver the God of heaven establishes by revelation his design, Satan always comes among men to pervert the doctrine, saying, “Believe it not.” He often establishes a counterfeit system, designed to deceive the children of men. His aim, as it was before the foundation of this earth was laid, is to thwart the agency of man and to subjugate him. Throughout all ages of mankind, the adversary has used human agents and despotic governments to establish his purpose.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [BYU, 4/12/77](#)

The gospel of Jesus Christ can prosper only in an atmosphere of freedom. As members of his Church, we have a major responsibility to do all in our power to see that freedom is preserved and safeguarded.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [BYU, 4/12/77](#)

Another notable counterfeit system to the Lord's plan is collectivized socialism. Socialism derives its philosophy from the founders of communism, Marx and Engels. Communism in practice is socialism. Its purpose is world socialism, which the communists seek to achieve by revolution, and which the socialists seek to achieve by evolution. Both communism and socialism have the same effect upon the individual—a loss of personal liberty.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [BYU, 4/12/77](#)

Why is socialism incompatible with man's liberty? Socialism cannot work except through an all-powerful state. The state has to be supreme in everything. When individuals begin to exert their God-given rights, the state has to suppress that freedom. So belief in God must be suppressed, and with that gone freedom of conscience and religion must also go. Those are the first of our liberties mentioned in the Bill of Rights.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [BYU, 4/12/77](#)

There are some among us who would confuse the united order with socialism. That is a serious misunderstanding. It is significant to me that the Prophet Joseph Smith, after attending lectures on socialism in his day, made this official entry in the Church history: "I said I did not believe the doctrine."

-Ezra Taft Benson, [BYU, 4/12/77](#)

As citizens of this noble land, we have marched a long way down the soul-destroying road of socialism... If we continue to follow the trend in which we are heading today, two things will inevitably result: first, a loss of our personal freedom, and second, financial bankruptcy. This is the price we pay when we turn away from God and the principles which he has taught and turn to government to do everything for us. It is the formula by which nations become enslaved.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [BYU, 4/12/77](#)

James Madison opposed the proposal to put Congress in the role of promoting the general welfare according to its whims in these words: "If Congress can employ money indefinitely to the general welfare, they may take the care of religion into their own hands; they may appoint teachers in every state, county and parish and pay them out of their public treasure; they may take into their own hands the education of children, establishing in like manner schools throughout the Union; they may assume the provision of the poor... Were the power of Congress to be established in the latitude contended for, it would subvert the very foundations, and transmute the very nature of the limited Government established by the people of America." That statement, given as a warning, has proved prophetic.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [BYU, 4/12/77](#)

It has been fundamental to our way of life that charity must be voluntary if it is to be charity. Compulsory benevolence is not charity. Today's socialists—who call themselves egalitarians—are using the federal government to redistribute wealth in our society, not as a matter of voluntary charity, but as a so-called matter of right.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [BYU, 4/12/77](#)

God intended that men and women would be free to make choices between good and evil. When evil choices become the dominant characteristic of a culture or nation, there are serious consequences both in this life and the life to come. People can become enslaved or put themselves in bondage not only to harmful, addictive substances but also to harmful, addictive philosophies that detract from righteous living.

-Quentin L. Cook, [October 2013 General Conference](#)

[T]he most universal subjugation in our day, as it has been throughout history, is ideology or political beliefs that are inconsistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Substituting the philosophies of men for gospel truth can lead us away from the simplicity of the Savior's message.

-Quentin L. Cook, [October 2013 General Conference](#)

[In our day], gospel truths are often rejected or distorted to make them intellectually more appealing or compatible with current cultural trends and intellectual philosophies. If we are not careful, we can be captured by these trends and place ourselves in intellectual bondage.

-Quentin L. Cook, [October 2013 General Conference](#)

[F]orces that violate sincerely held religious principles can result in bondage. One of the most invidious forms is when righteous people who feel accountable to God for their conduct are forced into activities that violate their conscience—for example, health providers forced to choose between assisting with abortions against their consciences or losing their jobs.

-Quentin L. Cook, [October 2013 General Conference](#)

The Church is a relatively small minority even when linked with people who are like-minded. It will be hard to change society at large, but we must work to improve the moral culture that surrounds us. Latter-day Saints in every country should be good citizens, participate in civic affairs, educate themselves on the issues, and vote.

-Quentin L. Cook, [October 2013 General Conference](#)

Communism is of the devil. Communism started when the devil was cast out of heaven because of his rebelling against the will of his Father that men should have their free agency. Satan and his emissaries would rob men of their priceless freedom... It is well that all men know that the Church and the leaders of the Church stand squarely against communism.

-Hugh B. Brown, [Conference Report, April 1962, p. 89](#)

Certain freedoms are at the core of religious liberty because they lie within a fundamentally private sphere. Regarding these freedoms, there is little room for compromise. They include freedom of belief; freedoms related to family gospel teaching and worship; freedom to express your beliefs to another willing listener, such as in [missionary work](#); and freedoms related to the internal affairs of churches, including the establishment of church doctrine, the selection and regulation of priesthood leadership, and the determination of membership criteria. These religious freedoms fall within a zone of autonomy—personal and that of religious institutions—and thus are subject to little if any regulation by government. They are basically nonnegotiable.

-Lance B. Wickman, [“Religious Freedom in a Secular Age,” Ensign, July 2018](#)

Believers are entitled to the same rights of free speech and expression in the public square as nonbelievers. That means they have the same First Amendment right as any other citizen to express their views on public streets and sidewalks; to publish their beliefs via print, radio, the internet, and social media; to participate fully in democratic debates over matters of public policy, including controversial matters; and to petition the government for protection of their interests. These are basic freedoms inherent in American citizenship and are likewise nonnegotiable.

-Lance B. Wickman, [“Religious Freedom in a Secular Age,” Ensign, July 2018](#)

[T]hose with traditional beliefs regarding marriage, family, gender, and sexuality should not be excluded from being professional counselors, teachers, lawyers, doctors, or any other category of occupation where the government grants licenses. Nor should it be more difficult to establish a nonprofit religious organization than a secular nonprofit. And religious organizations should not be denied nonprofit status based on their doctrines and religious practices. Again, these basic rights to equal treatment are fundamental American freedoms and should not be open for discussion or compromise.

-Lance B. Wickman, [“Religious Freedom in a Secular Age,” Ensign, July 2018](#)

To defend religious freedom, we need wisdom—indeed, inspired wisdom. And that requires knowledge. So, it is vital that we become informed about what religious freedom means; what freedoms are most essential; which competing social interests exist; how society and our friends, neighbors, and children view religious freedom; what challenges religious freedom faces; and how those challenges will affect real people living real lives.

-Lance B. Wickman, [“Religious Freedom in a Secular Age,” Ensign, July 2018](#)

What is needed is for you to get involved in the political, community, professional, and business organizations around you and to express your concern and support for religious freedom. The time for an insular focus on just our own families and congregations is gone. We have to get involved in the community organizations around us and encourage them to be respectful and supportive of religious freedom, even when that means accommodating to some extent beliefs and practices we don't like.

-Lance B. Wickman, ["Religious Freedom in a Secular Age," Ensign, July 2018](#)

Whether we are willing to admit it or not, our one great need is to turn to God. Our human efforts have failed and seem almost to lead us into ever more difficult entanglements. We need more than human wisdom. We need divine help.

-Mark E. Petersen, [Conference Report, April 1968, p. 60](#)

Preach the sacredness of family ties – the perpetuation of the family as the cornerstone of society.

-David O. McKay, [Conference Report, April 1952, pp. 15-16](#)

God offered to save Sodom and Gomorrah if only ten righteous people could be found therein, and God will prosper us if we will faithfully carry forward our double assignment of so serving God and our country that many hundreds of millions of truth-seeking, freedom-loving, God-fearing men and women may be entitled to the everlasting blessings of our eternal Heavenly Father.

-Sterling W. Sill, [Conference Report, October 1970, p. 79](#)

How grateful we ought to be that God raised up such men as our founding fathers to stand in the forefront of our civilization and give our nation its start toward its destiny.

-Sterling W. Sill, [Conference Report, October 1970, p. 76](#)

It is a divine decree that this land should serve as the citadel of liberty. And it is the American mission to keep freedom, righteousness, and human dignity alive in the world.

-Sterling W. Sill, [Conference Report, October 1970, p. 76](#)

Proclaim the necessity of honesty and loyalty, doing an honest day's work for an honest day's pay. Preach that honesty in government is essential to the perpetuation and stability of our government as it is necessary to the stability of character in the individual.

-David O. McKay, [Conference Report, April 1952, p. 16](#)

Major Martin Treptow, who fought in World War I, was a good soldier. Before he gave his life in the battle of Chateau-Thierry, he wrote in his diary, "I will work, I will save, I will sacrifice, I will endure. I will fight cheerfully and do my utmost as though the entire conflict depended upon me alone." And whether we are engaged on a moral or a military battlefield, even one man can, if he will, change the morale of a whole community.

-Sterling W. Sill, [Conference Report, October 1970, p. 78](#)

When we sing "God Bless America," what kind of an America should we have in mind? Certainly not a drunken America, nor a criminal America, nor an irresponsible America. We must not build an atheistic America, nor a disloyal America, nor a weak America, nor an immoral America. And to effectively serve God and our country, every good church member and every good citizen should be constantly waging war – not a war against anybody, but a war for everybody, a war for God and for freedom and for truth and for righteousness and for success.

-Sterling W. Sill, [Conference Report, October 1970, p. 76](#)

Religious participation in public life is one of the golden threads in our national tapestry.

-D. Todd Christofferson, [2016 Provo Freedom Festival](#)

Now, the great consolation and hope of every patriot should be that God is in his heaven; ...that in due time every wrong shall be righted, every virtue justified, every evil punished, and every good rewarded. But for the immediate future, we face times and calamities that will test the spiritual fiber of the best of us.

-Ezra Taft Benson, *Stand Up for Freedom*, p. 195

We believe that rulers, states, and governments have a right, and are bound to enact laws for the protection of all citizens in the free exercise of their religious belief; but we do not believe that they have a right in justice to deprive citizens of this privilege, or proscribe them in their opinions, so long as a regard and reverence are shown to the laws and such religious opinions do not justify sedition nor conspiracy.

-D&C 134:7

Each year, many fall victim in the colleges and universities. There, as captive audiences, their faith, their patriotism, and their morality are lined up against a wall and riddled by words shot down from the mouths of irreverent professors.

Most [professors], I repeat, have influenced your lives for good. But there are others, those few, who delight in destroying faith.

-Boyd K. Packer, *That All May be Edified*, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982

We are very particular to forbid anyone from preaching Catholicism, or Protestantism, or Mormonism, or Judaism in a public school classroom, but for some reason we are very patient with those who teach the negative expression of religion.

In the separation of church and state we ought to demand more protection from the agnostic, from the atheist, from the communist, from the skeptic, from the humanist and the pragmatist than we have been given.

-Boyd K. Packer, *That All May be Edified*, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982

I declare in favor of full academic freedom. If prayer is to leave the public schools, let the ridicule of prayer leave also.

-Boyd K. Packer, Utah State University, 6/8/73

Taken from *That All May be Edified*, 1982

I submit that the atheist has no more right to teach the fundamentals of his sect in the public school than does the theist.

Any system in the schools or in society that protects the destruction of faith and forbids, in turn, the defense of it must ultimately destroy the moral fiber of the people.

Is any lesson more abundantly clear in our present society? We are coming apart at the seams. Anyone can see that. Just read any newspaper any day. Evil has unclothed herself and walks the streets in brazen, impudent defiance.

-Boyd K. Packer, Utah State University, 6/8/73

Taken from *That All May be Edified*, 1982

The patrons of a university, the citizens who finance it, have the right to send their sons and daughters to school without the anxiety that they will be taught sectarian religion, including that of the atheist. They have the right to expect that the standards of campus discipline and dormitory living are not dictated by a few ultra-liberals who are confined by no moral standards whatsoever.

-Boyd K. Packer, Utah State University, 6/8/73

Taken from *That All May be Edified*, 1982

It is equally ridiculous to separate theism from atheism and claim that they are two separate matters, particularly when we condone, in some instances encourage, the atheist to preach his doctrine in the college classroom, and then at once move with great vigor to eliminate any positive reference to God. He is protected, as they say, by the principle of academic freedom.

The administrator in the university today who intends to maintain academic freedom had better see to it that he administers impartially. Otherwise he offends the very principle he claims to sustain.

-Boyd K. Packer, Utah State University, 6/8/73

Taken from *That All May be Edified*, 1982

Some years ago, a plaintiff prospered in her grievance concerning the saying of prayers in public schools. The practice was declared unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court. That decision was a partial decision, for the effect was, regardless of the intent, to offer great encouragement to those who would erase from our society every trace of reference to the Almighty.

She wanted to protect her son from any contact with religion, and now her son is protected from my type of religion-but my son is exposed to hers.

-Boyd K. Packer, Utah State University, 6/8/73

Taken from *That All May be Edified*, 1982

Functional illiteracy in America is high in certain age groups. This is in addition to a more massive economic illiteracy about how our system works, which is an even more ominous failure. Even though our governments are bigger and more powerful than ever, many in the rising generation know less and less about how we are governed.

-Neal A. Maxwell, ["The Prohibitive Costs of a Value-Free Society," Ensign, October 1978](#)

If we are not committed to certain truths, ambiguity will replace absolutes, tentativeness will replace truth, regulations measured by the pound instead of by principles will replace liberty, a tenured bureaucracy will replace democracy, and hesitancy will replace heroism.

Once society loses its capacity to declare that some things are wrong *per se*, then it finds itself forever building temporary defenses, revising rationales, drawing new lines—but forever falling back and losing its nerve. A society which permits anything will eventually lose everything!

-Neal A. Maxwell, ["The Prohibitive Costs of a Value-Free Society," Ensign, October 1978](#)

Out of the homes of America go the future citizens of the republic. Upon properly ordered households and the uplifting moral atmosphere of home life depends more than upon any other phase of the social life the happiness of the human family. *Home*, not the state, is the natural protector of childhood.

Parents more than teachers, more than officers of the law, are the molders of children's moral natures.

-David O. McKay, [Conference Report, October 1943, p. 29](#)

Would you have a strong and virile nation? –then keep your homes pure. Would you reduce delinquency and crime? –lessen the number of broken homes. It is time that civilized peoples realize that the home largely determines whether children shall be of high or low character. Home-building, therefore, should be the paramount purpose of parents, and of the nation.

-David O. McKay, [Conference Report, October 1943, p. 33](#)

In answer to inquiries that have been received by the First Presidency about sex education in the schools, they have made the following statement: “We believe that serious hazards are involved in entrusting to the schools the teaching of this vital and important subject to our children. This responsibility cannot wisely be left to society, nor the schools; nor can the responsibility be shifted to the Church. It is the responsibility of parents to see that they fully perform their duty in this respect.”

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1969, p. 13](#)

When you make a close study of the Sex Information and Education Council of the United States (known as SIECUS), which is the major organization pushing sex education in the schools, and read their literature and learn of their amoral leadership, you can better appreciate why the Church is opposed to sex education in the schools, whether it is called family living program or by any other name.

- Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1969, p. 13](#)

Knowing as we do that God set up this Constitution of ours and that He has declared it “should be maintained for the rights and protection of all flesh, according to just and holy principles” (D&C 101:77), it is the duty of every member of the Church to protect and defend the Constitution against any and all attack.

-J. Reuben Clark, [Conference Report, October 1941, p. 19](#)

[W]e were all born to set right whatever should be set right that is within our reach. We shouldn’t dodge or run from duty, but should be engaged in the service of our fellowmen, in the service of the Master, in doing all that should and can be done.

-Richard L. Evans, [Conference Report, October 1968, p. 43](#)

Let us realize that God is mightier than all the earth. Let us realize that if we are faithful in keeping the commandments of God and cherishing the principles inspired of him, his promises will be fulfilled to the very letter... The trouble is, the adversary of men’s souls blinds their minds. He throws dust, so to speak, in their eyes, and they are blinded with the things of this world, and the adversary obtains power over them, and robs them of their freedom, which is what he tried to do in the beginning.

-Heber J. Grant, [Conference Report, October 1944, p. 12](#)

Because of the long history of hostility upon the earth, many feel that peace is beyond hope. I disagree. Peace is possible. We can learn to love our fellow human beings throughout the world. Whether they be Jewish, Islamic, or fellow Christians, whether Hindu, Buddhist, or other, we can live together with mutual admiration and respect, without forsaking our religious convictions. Things we have in common are greater than are our differences. Peace is a prime priority that pleads for our pursuit.

-Russell M. Nelson, [October 2002 General Conference](#)

Men establish governments for the purpose of securing freedom, but in doing so they create the greatest threat to freedom which exists – the government under which they live. This same agency which is so necessary to secure freedom may also become its greatest enemy. Thus it becomes imperative that governments be kept within their proper bounds if freedom is to be maintained.

-H. Verlan Andersen, *Many Are Called But Few Are Chosen*, p. 2

And that law of the land which is constitutional, supporting that principle of freedom in maintaining rights and privileges, belongs to all mankind, and is justifiable before me.

Therefore, I, the Lord, justify you, and your brethren of my church, in befriending that law which is the constitutional law of the land;

And as pertaining to law of man, whatsoever is more or less than this, cometh of evil.

-D&C 98:5-7

I, the Lord God, make you free, therefore ye are free indeed; and the law also maketh you free. Nevertheless, when the wicked rule the people mourn. Wherefore, honest men and wise men should be sought for diligently, and good men and wise men ye should observe to uphold; otherwise whatsoever is less than these cometh of evil.

-D&C 98:8-10

Equally fatal to freedom is the ignorance or indifference of the voting majority. Unless they perceive with clarity that line which divides right from wrong in government action, and resist with firmness any attempt to cross it, the natural tendency of men to abuse power will cause those in office to enlarge their functions until liberty is crushed under the weight of bureaucratic despotism.

-H. Verlan Andersen, *Many Are Called But Few Are Chosen*, p. 3

It is a truism taught by the sages and prophets and proved repeatedly in the history of nations that wickedness and liberty cannot exist side by side.

-H. Verlan Andersen, *Many Are Called But Few Are Chosen*, p. 3

“If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31-32). From this, it would appear that only those who obey Christ’s teachings (continue in my word) shall know the truth and be free. The promise of freedom to those who will obey, runs throughout all scripture. Conversely, we are warned that if we are wicked, our enslavement by Satan is certain.

-H. Verlan Andersen, *Many Are Called But Few Are Chosen*, p. 5

Were these Founding Fathers and pioneer forefathers to counsel us today in their fundamental beliefs – so manifest by their acts – what would they say to us?

...They would counsel us on the dignity of work, to practice thrift, and to be self-sustaining. Theirs was a philosophy that neither the world nor the government owes a man his bread. Man is commanded of God to live by the sweat of his brow, not someone else's. In Thomas Jefferson's First Inaugural Address, he counseled us toward a wise and frugal government, one which "shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it had earned."

-Ezra Taft Benson, [October 1976 General Conference](#)

I marvel at the faith and courage of our early leaders. Among them were many lamplighters who carried the torch of freedom. Ben Franklin was one of them . . . One man touched a city, a city touched a state, a state touched a nation, and a nation touched the world. This was the man who said he would like to come back in 200 years to see if Americans still valued their freedom. I wonder what his reaction would be if he were granted that privilege. I believe his scientific mind would be excited with our growth and progress. But I believe that his civic pride would be wounded and hurt if he witnessed how content we are to fill the role of spectator rather than player on the field . . .

-L. Tom Perry, [October 1973 General Conference](#)

There should be no doubt what our task is today. If we truly cherish the heritage we have received, we must maintain the same virtues and the same character of our stalwart forebears—faith in God, courage, industry, frugality, self-reliance, and integrity. We have the obligation to maintain what those who pledged their lives, their fortunes, and sacred honor gave to future generations. Our opportunity and obligation for doing so is clearly upon us.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [October 1976 General Conference](#)

This is a time when you and I can afford to be patriotic, in the best sense of that term. There is reason to be proud that we live in an established land that has been conditioned by the Lord so that his gospel could be restored. The purpose of America was to provide a setting wherein that was possible. All else takes its power from that one great, central purpose.

-Paul H. Dunn, [October 1975 General Conference](#)

We heard Brother Taylor's exposition of what is called Socialism this morning. What can they do? Live on each other and beg. It is a poor, unwise and very imbecile people who cannot take care of themselves.

-President Brigham Young, 1870, [Journal of Discourses, 14:21](#)

The danger always is in a Republic, and particularly in a happy Republic such as ours has been, that the citizenry will not be conscious of threatening dangers. Such is our case today.

-J. Reuben Clark, New York City, 12/15/39

I am surprised (I would be amused if the cost were not so great) that people think they can remove the foundations of our social structure - things like work, chastity, and family - and then wonder why other things crumble. You can't remove the foundation of a building while standing inside and not be hit with falling plaster.

-Neal A. Maxwell, [BYU, 9/1/74](#)

You're soon going to go out into a world full of marshmallow men. Like the act of putting a finger into a marshmallow, there is no core in these men, there is no center, and when one removes his finger, the marshmallow resumes its former shape. We are in a world of people who want to yield to everything - to every fad and to every fashion. It is incredibly important that we be committed to the core - committed to those things that matter, about which our Father in heaven has leveled with us through his Son, Jesus Christ, and his prophets.

-Neal A. Maxwell, [BYU, 9/1/74](#)

I saw an interesting cartoon not too long ago that . . . showed two multicolored desert lizards conversing. One said to the other, "Of course you're going through an identity crisis. You're a chameleon."

Of course the world is going through an identity crisis. Of course it's adrift: it's got no anchor. It does not have core principles upon which to decide all other things. I am grateful that our beliefs are related to the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

-Neal A. Maxwell, [BYU, 9/1/74](#)

...[H]uman liberty is the mainspring of human progress.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1962, p. 14](#)

In that sacred volume of scripture, the Book of Mormon, we note the great and prolonged struggle for liberty. We also note the complacency of the people and their frequent willingness to give up their liberty for the promises of a would-be provider.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1962, p. 14](#)

This great general, Moroni, like the prophets whose words are recorded in the Book of Mormon, spoke of the Americas as a chosen land—the land of liberty. He led the people in battle who were willing to fight to "maintain their liberty" (Alma 46:28).

And the record states "that he caused the title of liberty to be hoisted upon every tower which was in all the land ... and thus Moroni planted the standard of liberty among the Nephites" (Alma 46:36).

This is our need today—to plant the standard of liberty among our people throughout the Americas.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1962, p. 14](#)

As a Church we have a world message of salvation to deliver to our Father's children. The restored gospel can only thrive in an atmosphere of liberty. We are in a worldwide conflict. It is the first of its kind in history. It is between light and darkness; between liberty and slavery. It is a struggle for the souls of men. We must win this war.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1962, p. 17](#)

Courage and statesmanship are imperatively needed today. We must take chances for liberty. May God bless our national leaders in this time of crisis.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1962, pp. 18-19](#)

Yes, the effective preaching of the gospel can only thrive in an atmosphere of liberty. Yes, we all say, we love liberty. But that is not enough. We must protect and safeguard that which we love. We must save liberty. God grant us the wisdom and the courage so to do, before it is too late.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1962, p. 19](#)

In these days of uncertainty and unrest, liberty-loving people's greatest responsibility and paramount duty is to preserve and proclaim the freedom of the individual, his relationship to Deity, and the necessity of obedience to the principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. *Only thus will mankind find peace and happiness.*

-David O. McKay, [Conference Report, October 1962, p. 8](#)

Above all else, strive to support good and conscientious candidates *of either party* who are aware of the great dangers inherent in communism, and who are truly dedicated to the Constitution in the tradition of our founding fathers. They should also pledge their sincere fealty to our way of liberty—a liberty which aims at the preservation of both personal and property rights. Study the issues, analyze the candidates on these grounds, and then exercise your franchise as free men and women. Never be found guilty of exchanging your birthright for a mess of pottage!

-David O. McKay, [Conference Report, October 1962, p. 8](#)

History, both sacred and secular, clearly records that the struggle to preserve and safeguard freedom has been a continuous one. Prophets of God as watchmen on the towers, have proclaimed liberty. Holy men of God have led the fight against anarchy and tyranny... Why have prophets of God been commanded to proclaim liberty and lead the battle to preserve freedom? Because freedom is basic to the great plan of the Lord. The gospel can prosper only in an atmosphere of freedom.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1966, p. 121](#)

In spite of the scriptural evidence and the counsel of modern-day prophets during the past more than 100 years, there are still some who seem to feel we have no responsibility to safeguard and strengthen our precious God-given freedom. There are some who apparently feel that the fight for freedom is separate from the gospel. They express it in several ways, but it generally boils down to this: Just live the gospel; there's no need to get involved in trying to save freedom and the Constitution or to stop Communism.

Of course, this is dangerous reasoning, because in reality you cannot fully live the gospel without working to save freedom and the Constitution, and to stop Communism.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1966, p. 122](#)

Of course, the war in heaven over free agency is now being waged here on earth, and there are those today who are saying "Look, don't get involved in the fight for freedom. Just live the gospel." That counsel is dangerous, self-contradictory, unsound.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1966, p. 122](#)

Moroni raised a title of liberty and wrote upon it these words: "In memory of our God, our religion, and freedom, and our peace, our wives, and our children" (Alma 46:12). Why didn't he write upon it: "Just live your religion; there's no need to concern yourselves about your freedom, your peace, your wives, or your children"? The reason he didn't do this was because all these things were a part of his religion, as they are of our religion today.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1966, p. 122](#)

Should we counsel people, "Just live your religion. There's no need to get involved in the fight for freedom"? No, we should not, because our stand for freedom is a most basic part of our religion; this stand helped get us to this earth, and our reaction to freedom in this life will have eternal consequences. Man has many duties, but he has no excuse that can compensate for his loss of liberty.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1966, p. 122](#)

All men are entitled to inspiration, especially men who bear the priesthood, but only one man is the Lord's mouthpiece. Some lesser men have used in the past, and will use in the future, their offices

unrighteously. Some will, ignorantly or otherwise, use their office to promote false counsel; some will use it to lead the unwary astray; some will use it to persuade us that all is well in Zion: some will use it to cover and excuse their ignorance. Keep your eye on the Prophet, for the Lord will never permit his Prophet to lead this Church astray. Let us live close to the Spirit, so we can test all counsel.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1966, p. 123](#)

An old adage declares, "A society of sheep must in time beget a government of wolves."

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1966, p. 124](#)

Yes, we all love the gospel—or should do. We should all strive to live according to its precepts. But the basic thread running through the gospel plan is the freedom, the right of choice, of the individual. The gospel can prosper only where there is freedom.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1966, p. 124](#)

Many differences of opinion over the role of religion in public life simply mirror a difference of opinion over whether there are moral absolutes. But this underlying difference is rarely made explicit. It is as if +those who assume that all values are relative have established their assumption by law or tradition and have rendered illegitimate the fundamental belief of those who hold that some values are absolute.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [Ensign, October 1992](#)

Some moral absolutes or convictions must be at the foundation of any system of law. This does not mean that all laws are so based. Many laws and administrative actions are simply a matter of wisdom or expediency. But many laws and administrative actions are based upon the moral standards of our society. If most of us believe that it is wrong to kill or steal or lie, our laws will include punishment for those acts. If most of us believe that it is right to care for the poor and needy, our laws will accomplish or facilitate those activities. Society continually legislates morality. The only question is whose morality and what legislation.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [Ensign, October 1992](#)

Some reject the infusion of religious-based values in public policy by urging that much of the violence and social divisiveness of the modern world is attributable to religious controversies. But all should remember that the most horrible moral atrocities of the twentieth century in terms of death and human misery have been committed by regimes that are unambiguously secular, not religious.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [Ensign, October 1992](#)

Apparently, churchmen can preach morality and religion as long as they do not suggest that their particular brand of religion has any connection with morality or that the resulting morality has any connection with political policies. Stated otherwise, religious preaching is okay so long as it has no practical impact on the listeners' day-to-day behavior, especially any behavior that has anything to do with political activity or public policy.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [Ensign, October 1992](#)

I have read serious academic arguments to the effect that religious people can participate in public debate only if they conceal the religious origin of their values by translating them into secular dialect. In a nation committed to pluralism, this kind of hostility to religion should be legally illegitimate and morally unacceptable.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [Ensign, October 1992](#)

No person with values based on religious beliefs should apologize for taking those values into the public square. Religious persons need to be skillful in how they do so, but they need not yield to an adversary's assumption that the whole effort is illegitimate. We should remind others of the important instances in which the efforts of churches and clergy in the political arena have influenced American public policies in great historical controversies whose outcome is virtually unquestioned today.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [Ensign, October 1992](#)

I believe that questions of right and wrong, whether based on religious principles or any other source of values, are legitimate in any debate over laws or public policy. Is there anything more important to debate than what is right or wrong? And those arguments should be open across the entire political spectrum. There is no logical way to contend that religious arguments or lobbying are legitimate on the question of abstinence from nuclear war by nations but not on the question of abstinence from sexual relations by teenagers.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [Ensign, October 1992](#)

Perhaps the root fear of those who object to official church participation in political debates is power: They fear that believers will choose to follow the directions or counsel of their religious leaders... Some may believe that reason is not free when religious leaders have spoken, but I doubt that any religious leader in twentieth-century America has such a grip on followers that they cannot make a reasoned choice in the privacy of the voting booth. In fact, I have a hard time believing that the teachings of religions or churches deprive their adherents of any more autonomy in exerting the rights of citizenship than the teachings and practices of labor unions, civil rights groups, environmental organizations, political parties, or any other membership group in our society.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [Ensign, October 1992](#)

I submit that religious leaders should have at least as many privileges as any other leaders, and that churches should stand on at least as strong a footing as any other corporation when they enter the public square to participate in public policy debates. The precious constitutional right of petition does not exclude any individual or any group. The same is true of freedom of speech and the press. When religion has a special constitutional right to its free exercise, religious leaders and churches should have *more* freedom than other persons and organizations, not less.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [Ensign, October 1992](#)

In section 93 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord declares, “All truth is independent in that sphere in which God has placed it, to act for itself, as all intelligence also; otherwise there is no existence.” I take this to mean that all truth, including the truth that governs our present sphere, exists independent and apart. It is unaffected by my preference or your opinion. It stands independent of any effort to control or change it. It cannot be lobbied or influenced in any way. It is a fixed reality.

-D. Todd Christofferson, [“Truth Endures,” CES Broadcast, 1/26/18](#)

Members of the Church everywhere are urged to not only resist the widespread plague of pornography, but as citizens to become actively and relentlessly engaged in the fight against this insidious enemy of humanity around the world.

-Spencer W. Kimball, [October 1976 General Conference](#)

Last year billions of dollars were spent worldwide on obscene motion pictures and literature. This smut is surfacing in bookstores, magazine shops, motion picture theaters, and unfortunately, in some department stores, food markets, and even drugstores. We urge Latter-day Saints to get involved as citizens and fight obscenity.

-Spencer W. Kimball, [October 1976 General Conference](#)

Teach your children to avoid smut as the plague it is. As citizens, join in the fight against obscenity in your communities. Do not be lulled into inaction by the pornographic profiteers who say that to remove obscenity is to deny people the rights of free choice. Do not let them masquerade licentiousness as liberty. Precious souls are at stake—souls that are near and dear to each of us.

-Spencer W. Kimball, [October 1976 General Conference](#)

No government can remain strong by ignoring the commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai.

-Spencer W. Kimball, [October 1976 General Conference](#)

We hope that you will go to the polls in large numbers and vote for the strongest, finest people who are certain to do the most to safeguard the rights and freedoms of the people.

-Spencer W. Kimball, [October 1976 General Conference](#)

I think you would agree that the philosophy of moral relativism has made great inroads in our time. “Not judging” has become an almost unchallengeable standard for conversation and behavior. But in reality, we all make judgments about what is right and wrong, and not just for ourselves, but for the people and the society around us. Laws and systems of law, even political systems, are the embodiment of moral values and perceived truths. In a pluralistic society, we may debate what values should be enshrined in laws or regulations and what is right or wrong or true, but in the end, on any given issue, someone’s view, or some group’s view, of truth prevails and everyone becomes bound by it.

-D. Todd Christofferson, [“Truth Endures,” CES Broadcast, 1/26/18](#)

In much of the world, relativist thinking has become a dominant philosophy. By relativism I mean the view that ethical or moral truths are relative, that they depend on the attitudes and feelings of those who hold them, and that no one can judge the validity of someone else’s “truth.” You hear a lot of talk these days about “my truth” and “his truth” or “her truth.”

...Moral relativism just doesn’t work if there is to be order and justice in society.

-D. Todd Christofferson, [“Truth Endures,” CES Broadcast, 1/26/18](#)

Our calling, and it is ever more urgent in this environment, is to teach the truth of moral concepts: what they are and how far they extend. We prize truth on any subject from any source, but eternal truth, especially as it bears on the meaning and the purpose and the conduct of life, we must obtain from God. Moral relativists generally see no role or relevance for God in this discussion and typically doubt that He even exists. It would be most inconvenient for them if He does exist, and even more so if He speaks to man. One can only think about truth as relative if God is not around.

-D. Todd Christofferson, [“Truth Endures,” CES Broadcast, 1/26/18](#)

Moral relativism does real harm as it acts to diminish conscience. If acknowledged and followed, conscience will lead to ever greater light and truth. But ignoring or suppressing conscience obviously leads one away from light and truth and into denial, error, and regret. Pretending there is no fixed, objective truth is nothing more than an attempt to evade responsibility and accountability. This is not a recipe for happiness.

-D. Todd Christofferson, [“Truth Endures,” CES Broadcast, 1/26/18](#)

While we pass laws to reduce pollution of the earth, any proposal to protect the moral and spiritual environment is shouted down and marched against as infringing upon liberty, agency, freedom, the right

to choose. Interesting how one virtue, when given exaggerated or fanatical emphasis, can be used to batter down another, with freedom, a virtue, invoked to protect *vice*.

-Boyd K. Packer, [April 1992 General Conference](#)

Those determined to transgress see any regulation of their life-style as interfering with their agency and seek to have their actions condoned by making them legal. People who are otherwise sensible say, "I do not intend to indulge, but I vote for freedom of choice for those who do."

Regardless of how lofty and moral the "pro-choice" argument sounds, it is badly flawed. With that same logic one could argue that all traffic signs and barriers which keep the careless from danger should be pulled down on the theory that each individual must be free to choose how close to the edge he will go.

-Boyd K. Packer, [April 1992 General Conference](#)

The phrase "*free agency*" does not appear in scripture. The only agency spoken of there is *moral agency*, "which," the Lord said, "I have given unto him, that every man may be *accountable* for his own sins in the day of judgment" (D&C 101:78).

And the Lord warned members of his church, "Let not that which I have appointed be polluted by mine enemies, *by the consent of those who call themselves after my name*: For this is a very sore and grievous sin against me, and against my people" (D&C 101:97-98).

-Boyd K. Packer, [April 1992 General Conference](#)

When a moral issue does arise, it is the responsibility of the leaders of the Church to speak out. Gambling, for instance, certainly is a moral issue. Life is a moral issue. When morality is involved, we have both the *right* and the *obligation* to raise a warning voice. We do not as a church speak on political issues unless morality is involved. In thirty years and thousands of interviews, I have never once asked a member of the Church what political party they belonged to.

-Boyd K. Packer, [April 1992 General Conference](#)

Civilizations like Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed themselves by disobedience to the laws of morality. "For the Spirit of the Lord will not always strive with man. And when the Spirit ceaseth to strive with man then cometh speedy destruction."

God grant that we will come to our senses and protect our moral environment from this mist of darkness which deepens day by day. The fate of all humanity hangs precariously in the balance.

-Boyd K. Packer, [April 1992 General Conference](#)

The scriptures contain countless examples of those who have won their wars even in the midst of very hostile situations. One of these examples is Captain Moroni in the Book of Mormon. This remarkable young man had the courage to defend the truth at a time when there were many dissensions and wars which put at risk the very survival of the entire Nephite nation... Figuratively, all of us need to transform ourselves into modern Captain Moronis in order to win the wars against evil.

-Ulisses Soares, [April 2015 General Conference](#)

We cannot allow ourselves to be confused by popular messages that are easily accepted by the world and that contradict the doctrine and true principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Many of these worldly messages represent nothing more than an attempt of our society to justify sin. We need to remember that, at the end, all will stand before Christ to be judged of our works, whether they are good or whether they are evil. As we encounter these worldly messages, great courage and a solid knowledge of the plan of our Heavenly Father will be required to choose the right.

-Ulisses Soares, [April 2015 General Conference](#)

Because of the wave of confusion and doubt spreading throughout the world today, we must hold ever more tightly to our testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Then will our ability to defend truth and justice greatly increase. We will win the daily battles against evil, and, rather than fall on the battlefields of life, we will rally others to the Master's standards.

-Ulisses Soares, [April 2015 General Conference](#)

We are agents blessed with moral agency and are defined by our divine heritage as children of God--and not by sexual behaviors, contemporary attitudes, or secular philosophies.

-David A. Bednar, [April 2013 General Conference](#)

A pernicious philosophy that undermines women's moral influence is the devaluation of marriage and of motherhood and homemaking as a career. Some view homemaking with outright contempt, arguing it demeans women and that the relentless demands of raising children are a form of exploitation. They ridicule what they call "the mommy track" as a career. This is not fair or right. We do not diminish the value of what women or men achieve in any worthy endeavor or career--we all benefit from those achievements--but we still recognize there is not a higher good than motherhood and fatherhood in marriage. There is no superior career, and no amount of money, authority, or public acclaim can exceed the ultimate rewards of family. Whatever else a woman may accomplish, her moral influence is no more optimally employed than here.

-D. Todd Christofferson, [October 2013 General Conference](#)

Attitudes toward human sexuality threaten the moral authority of women on several fronts. Abortion for personal or social convenience strikes at the heart of a woman's most sacred powers and destroys

her moral authority.

-D. Todd Christofferson, [October 2013 General Conference](#)

There has long been a cultural double standard that expected women to be sexually circumspect while excusing male immorality. The unfairness of such a double standard is obvious, and it has been justifiably criticized and rejected. In that rejection, one would have hoped that men would rise to the higher, single standard, but just the opposite has occurred--women and girls are now encouraged to be as promiscuous as the double standard expected men to be. Where once women's higher standards demanded commitment and responsibility from men, we now have sexual relations without conscience, fatherless families, and growing poverty. Equal-opportunity promiscuity simply robs women of their moral influence and degrades all of society. In this hollow bargain, it is men who are "liberated" and women and children who suffer most.

-D. Todd Christofferson, [October 2013 General Conference](#)

A third area of concern comes from those who, in the name of equality, want to erase all differences between the masculine and the feminine. Often this takes the form of pushing women to adopt more masculine traits--be more aggressive, tough, and confrontational... In blurring feminine and masculine differences, we lose the distinct, complementary gifts of women and men that together produce a greater whole.

-D. Todd Christofferson, [October 2013 General Conference](#)

[F]ew of us will ever have to face an angry mob, but there is a war going on in this world in which our most cherished and basic doctrines are under attack. I am speaking specifically of the doctrine of the family. The sanctity of the home and the essential purposes of the family are being questioned, criticized, and assaulted on every front.

-Bonnie L. Oscarson, [April 2015 General Conference](#)

When President Gordon B. Hinckley first read "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" 20 years ago this year, we were grateful for and valued the clarity, simplicity, and truth of this revelatory document. Little did we realize then how very desperately we would need these basic declarations in today's world as the criteria by which we could judge each new wind of worldly dogma coming at us from the media, the Internet, scholars, TV and films, and even legislators.

-Bonnie L. Oscarson, [April 2015 General Conference](#)

The proclamation on the family has become our benchmark for judging the philosophies of the world, and I testify that the principles set forth within this statement are as true today as they were when they were given to us by a prophet of God nearly 20 years ago.

-Bonnie L. Oscarson, [April 2015 General Conference](#)

I would like to issue a challenge for all of us as women of the Church to be defenders of “The Family: A Proclamation to the World.” ...we need to boldly defend the Lord’s revealed doctrines describing marriage, families, the divine roles of men and women, and the importance of homes as sacred places—even when the world is shouting in our ears that these principles are outdated, limiting, or no longer relevant.

-Bonnie L. Oscarson, [April 2015 General Conference](#)

Everyone, no matter what their marital circumstance or number of children, can be defenders of the Lord’s plan described in the family proclamation. If it is the Lord’s plan, it should also be our plan!

-Bonnie L. Oscarson, [April 2015 General Conference](#)

There are three principles taught in the proclamation which I think are especially in need of steadfast defenders. The first is marriage between a man and a woman... This is the Lord’s plan for His children, and no amount of public discourse or criticism will change what the Lord has declared... Let us be defenders of marriage as the Lord has ordained it while continuing to show love and compassion for those with differing views.

-Bonnie L. Oscarson, [April 2015 General Conference](#)

Let us help build the kingdom of God by standing up boldly and being defenders of marriage, parenthood, and the home. The Lord needs us to be brave, steadfast, and immovable warriors who will defend His plan and teach the upcoming generations His truths.

-Bonnie L. Oscarson, [April 2015 General Conference](#)

Some “learned” souls delight in leading others astray, all in the so-called name of learning... We must gain learning, but we must apply it wisely. Otherwise, we have politics without principle, industry without morality, knowledge without wisdom, science without humanity!

-Russell M. Nelson, [October 1984 General Conference](#)

Labor well spent increases our capacity to do... But our labor can be misdirected. One can be anxiously engaged in a meaningless cause. Or one can do something wrong a hundred times and call it experience! Some would avoid labor while pursuing the goals of wealth without working for it, or an honored position without preparing for it.

-Russell M. Nelson, [October 1984 General Conference](#)

Regrettable as is the loss of loved ones from war, these figures are dwarfed by the toll of a new war that *annually* claims more casualties than the total number of fatalities from all the wars of this nation.

It is a war on the defenseless—and the voiceless. It is a war on the unborn. This war, labeled “abortion,” is of epidemic proportion and is waged globally.

-Russell M. Nelson, [April 1985 General Conference](#)

What sense of inconsistency can allow people to grieve for their dead, yet be calloused to this baleful war being waged on life at the time of its silent development? What logic would encourage efforts to preserve the life of a critically ill twelve-week-old infant, but countenance the termination of another life twelve weeks after inception?

-Russell M. Nelson, [April 1985 General Conference](#)

The woman’s choice for her own body does not validate choice for the body of another. The expression “terminate the pregnancy” applies literally only to the woman. The consequence of terminating the fetus therein involves the body and very life of another. These two individuals have separate brains, separate hearts, and separate circulatory systems. To pretend that there is no child and no life there is to deny reality.

-Russell M. Nelson, [April 1985 General Conference](#)

How can God fulfill his promise to prosper his children in obedience if they worship idols or destroy life created by him—destined to be in his very image?

-Russell M. Nelson, [April 1985 General Conference](#)

Now, as a servant of the Lord, I dutifully warn those who advocate and practice abortion that they incur the wrath of Almighty God, who declared, “If men ... hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, ... he shall be surely punished.” (Ex. 21:22.)

-Russell M. Nelson, [April 1985 General Conference](#)

Your foes in a sordid society demean the sacredness of women and the sanctity of motherhood. Your world, sickened by unchastity and plagued with sexually transmitted disease, needs your righteous example. For the wrath of God is provoked by governments that sponsor gambling, condone pornography, or legalize abortion. These forces serve to denigrate women now, just as they did in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah.

-Russell M. Nelson, [October 1987 General Conference](#)

We call upon responsible citizens and officers of government everywhere to promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society.

-The Family: A Proclamation to the World, [9/23/95](#)

[W]e warn that the disintegration of the family will bring upon individuals, communities, and nations the calamities foretold by ancient and modern prophets.

-The Family: A Proclamation to the World, [9/23/95](#)

A saint is an honorable citizen, knowing that the very country which provides opportunity and protection deserves support, including prompt payment of taxes and personal participation in its legal political process. (See D&C 134:5.)

-Russell M. Nelson, [April 1990 General Conference](#)

In recent years, many questions relate to the “choice” to abort the life of a newly forming human being. Ironically, such “choice” would deny that developing individual both life and choice.

-Russell M. Nelson, [October 1990 General Conference](#)

As I listen to those who argue for causes contrary to the commandments of God and observe individuals who revel in the pleasures of the world with apparent disregard for eventual judgment, I think of this divine description of their folly: “They despised my judgments, and walked not in my statutes, ... their heart went after their idols.” (Ezek. 20:16.)

-Russell M. Nelson, [October 1990 General Conference](#)

The sweets of liberty about which we usually speak may be classified as (1) political independence, (2) economic freedom, and (3) free agency.

I would have us strive for that liberty which comprehends all three of these freedoms, and more. I would have us strive for a freedom of the soul to which they all contribute.

- Marion G. Romney, [October 1981 General Conference](#)

Human nature cannot be changed by reforming public policy; that kind of change comes by exposing the human mind and heart to the transforming teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. I have learned that when we teach His correct principles, people govern themselves appropriately.

-Russell M. Nelson, [“Combatting Spiritual Drift,” Ensign, November 1993](#)

We encourage our members to be upright and loyal citizens in the countries that give them citizenship and to uphold governmental leaders and obey the civil laws wherever they live.

-Russell M. Nelson, [“Combatting Spiritual Drift,” Ensign, November 1993](#)

What kind of a country will we have if we, as one people, do not defend ourselves against the assaults of evil? Was it not Moroni who took a piece of his garment and wrote on it, in order to keep his people from slavery, "In memory of our God, our religion, and freedom and our peace, our wives, and our children."

-Charles A. Didier, [April 1976 General Conference](#)

This America is no ordinary country. It is a choice land, "choice above all other lands." It has a tragic and bloody past, but a glorious and peaceful future if its inhabitants really learn to serve their God.

-Spencer W. Kimball, [Conference Report, October 1961, p. 30](#)

Jesus Christ our Lord is under no obligation to save this world. The people have ignored him, disbelieved him, failed to follow him. They stand at his mercy which will be extended only if they repent. But to what extent have we repented? Another prophet said, "We call evil good, and good evil." Men have rationalized themselves into thinking that they are "not so bad." Are they fully ripe? Has the rot of age and flabbiness set in? Can they change? They see evil in their enemies, but none in themselves. Even in the true Church numerous of its people fail to attend their meetings, to tithe their incomes, to have their regular prayers, to keep all the commandments. We can transform, but will we?

-Spencer W. Kimball, [Conference Report, October 1961, p. 31](#)

"Experience is a dear teacher but fools will learn by no other." But we continue on in our godlessness. While the iron curtains rise and thicken, we eat, drink, and make merry. While armies are marshaled and march and drill and officers teach men how to kill, we continue to drink and carouse as usual. While bombs are detonated and tested, and fallout settles on the already sick world, we continue in idolatry and adultery. While corridors are threatened and concessions are made, we live riotously and divorce and marry in cycles like the seasons. While leaders quarrel, and editors write, and authorities analyze and prognosticate, we break the Sabbath as though no command had ever been given. While enemies filter into our nation to subvert us and intimidate us and soften us, we continue with our destructive thinking: "It can't happen here."

Will we ever turn wholly to God? Fear envelops the world which could be at ease and peace. In God is protection, safety, peace. He has said, "I will fight your battles." But his commitment is on condition of our faithfulness.

-Spencer W. Kimball, [Conference Report, October 1961, p. 32](#)

The Israelites failed to heed the warning. They ignored the prophets. They suffered the fulfillment of every dire prophecy. Do we twentieth century people have reason to think that we can be immune from the same tragic consequences when we ignore the same divine laws?

-Spencer W. Kimball, [Conference Report, October 1961, p. 33](#)

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Yet today we worship the gods of wood and stone and metal. Not always are they in the form of a golden calf, but equally real as objects of protection and worship. They are houses, lands, bank accounts, leisure. They are boats, cars, and luxuries. They are bombs and ships and armaments. We bow down to the god of mammon, the god of luxuries, the god of dissipation.

-Spencer W. Kimball, [Conference Report, October 1961, p. 33](#)

Perhaps we have been intimidated by those who claim that producing, distributing, and using obscene materials is a basic right to be defended. This is not true. Even under the divinely inspired constitutional principles of this land, obscenity is not condoned nor protected. The United States Supreme Court has clearly held that criminal prosecution of those who produce and distribute obscene materials does not violate their First Amendment rights.

-David B. Haight, [October 1984 General Conference](#)

Lawmaking bodies will listen to effectively organized citizens. However, too often the trend is tragically toward citizen apathy and a sense of futility.

-David B. Haight, [October 1984 General Conference](#)

What, then, is needed to reverse this ominous insult [of pornography] to ourselves, our families, and our communities? Only when men and women concerned for their families and communities let their voices and their influence be felt in thoughtful, rational ways will we alter the destructive course on which we are traveling. Silent indignation may be misinterpreted as approval. Irrational action may be ineffective because it is regarded as prudish rather than thoughtful.

-David B. Haight, [October 1984 General Conference](#)

Parents, discuss with your children of appropriate age, and in sensitive ways, the harmful effects and addictive nature of such [pornographic] material. Rigidly monitor the selection of television programs, movies, videocassettes, music, and other forms of entertainment for your family. Let us never, by purchasing these damaging materials, contribute to the financial success of those who deal in this material.

-David B. Haight, [October 1984 General Conference](#)

[L]et our voices be heard in our communities—members and nonmembers alike. If something offends standards of decency, our voices should be heard. We would encourage members to persevere in their efforts to work with local groups and to establish a visible relationship with other like-minded citizens, and seek to preserve our quality of life by encouraging steps against such material.

-David B. Haight, [October 1984 General Conference](#)

[L]et us exercise our faith and prayerfully seek help from God our Father in this vital task. There are some who believe that the pornography industry is out of control, already too powerful to curb. I would disagree with this dim view, but recognize the immensity of the task before us. We know that people of good will, united in such a worthy cause, where the moral fiber of our nations may be at stake, and aided by divine power, can overcome any obstacle and meet any challenge to help our Lord and Savior to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.

-David B. Haight, [October 1984 General Conference](#)

Many factors contribute to our people's predominant shallowness on the subject of religion, but one of them is surely higher education's general hostility or indifference to religion. Despite most colleges' and universities' founding purpose to produce clergymen and to educate in the truths taught in their chapels, most have now abandoned their role of teaching religion. With but few exceptions, colleges and universities have become value-free places where attitudes toward religion are neutral at best. Some faculty and administrators are powerful contributors to the forces that are driving religion to the margins of American society. Students and other religious people who believe in the living reality of God and moral absolutes are being marginalized.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [Harvard Law School, 2/26/10](#)

Some have suggested that religion is returning to intellectual life... But it seems unrealistic to expect higher education as a whole to resume a major role in teaching moral values. That will remain the domain of homes, churches, and church-related colleges and universities. All should hope for success in this vital task. The academy can pretend to neutrality on questions of right and wrong, but society cannot survive on such neutrality.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [Harvard Law School, 2/26/10](#)

My first fundamental premise of our faith is that God is real and so are eternal truths and values not provable by current scientific methods. These ideas are inevitably linked. Like other believers, we proclaim the existence of the ultimate lawgiver, God our Eternal Father, and the existence of moral absolutes. We reject the moral relativism that is becoming the unofficial creed of much of American culture.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [Harvard Law School, 2/26/10](#)

We affirm that marriage is necessary for the accomplishment of God's plan, to provide the approved setting for mortal birth, and to prepare family members for eternal life. Knowledge of God's plan gives Latter-day Saints a unique perspective on marriage and children. We look on the bearing and nurturing of children as part of God's plan and a sacred duty of those given the power to participate in it. We believe that the ultimate treasures on earth and in heaven are our children and our posterity. And we believe that we must contend for the kind of mortal families that provide the best conditions for the development and happiness of children - all children.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [Harvard Law School, 2/26/10](#)

There are many political, legal, and social pressures for changes that de-emphasize the importance or change the definition of marriage, confuse gender, or homogenize the differences between men and women that are essential to accomplish God's great Plan of Happiness. Our eternal perspective sets us against such changes.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [Harvard Law School, 2/26/10](#)

The Lord expects a great deal from us. Parents, please teach your children and practice yourselves the principle of inclusion of others and not exclusion because of religious, political, or cultural differences.

-M. Russell Ballard, [October 2001 General Conference](#)

I now speak to all those who are not of our faith. If there are issues of concern, let us talk about them. We want to be helpful. Please understand, however, that our doctrines and teachings are set by the Lord, so sometimes we will have to agree to disagree with you, but we can do so without being disagreeable. In our communities we can and must work together in an atmosphere of courtesy, respect, and civility.

-M. Russell Ballard, [October 2001 General Conference](#)

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34–35).

That is what Jesus taught His disciples—including "a certain lawyer"—through the parable of the Good Samaritan. And that is what He is teaching us today through living prophets and apostles. Love one another. Be kind to one another despite our deepest differences. Treat one another with respect and civility.

-M. Russell Ballard, [October 2001 General Conference](#)

[No] people can fight God and live! Every nation will feel a chastening hand if it turns its back upon the Ruler of Heaven and violates his eternal precepts.

-Mark E. Petersen, [October 1979 General Conference](#)

Does our modern world accept or reject Jesus Christ? And if we reject him, does the prospect of desolation concern us? Do the so-called Christian nations really obey him? Or by their crimes and corruption do they essentially deny him while giving him lip service?

He despises lip service! No one objects more strenuously to hypocrisy than does the Almighty. And so, do our Christian nations really accept and obey him?

-Mark E. Petersen, [October 1979 General Conference](#)

Do you suppose that [the Lord] might now say, “O America, America, how often would I gather your children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing”?

...If we reject him in this modern age, can it be less serious than was the apostasy of ancient Israel when they turned to idolatry? It is no trivial thing to reject Almighty God, either by a show of indifference or with malice aforethought.

-Mark E. Petersen, [October 1979 General Conference](#)

Why should legislatures condone immorality, whether homosexual or otherwise? Why should officers of state condone vice and even protect it? Why should lawmakers—why should the courts—oppose prayer and reading of the scriptures, doing so in the name of the constitution of this land, where we daily affirm, “In God is our trust”?

Are they for Christ or against him in this Christian land? Can there be any neutrality with respect to God?

-Mark E. Petersen, [October 1979 General Conference](#)

Almost like children, we fret over our fuel shortages and other inconveniences. We resent restrictions upon our pleasure-seeking activities. Why don’t we admit like grown men and women that a rejection of God is at the very root of all of our troubles? Why do we refuse to wake up to the facts in our situation? Why must we blindly plunge on into catastrophe?

Should we not take right and proper steps to overcome our conflicts, our crimes, and all of our corruptions? There is but one sure and certain way: *return to God!*

-Mark E. Petersen, [October 1979 General Conference](#)

[God] can give [us] peace—genuine peace—mentally, physically, spiritually, economically, and politically. But [we] must pay the price, which is sincere obedience to the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why, in the name of common sense, can we not see it? Why in the name of reason do we not turn to him, readily and cheerfully? It is the only safe course.

-Mark E. Petersen, [October 1979 General Conference](#)

Today we have a rebirth of ancient Sodom and Gomorrah. From seldom-read pages in dusty Bibles they come forth as real cities in a real world, depicting a real malady—pernicious permissiveness [toward pornography].

We have the capacity and the responsibility to stand as a bulwark between all we hold dear and the fatal contamination of the pornography beetle.

-Thomas S. Monson, [October 1979 General Conference](#)

May I suggest three specific steps in our battle plan [against pornography]:

First, a return to righteousness. An understanding of who we are and what God expects us to become will prompt us to pray—as individuals and as families. Such a return reveals the constant truth: “Wickedness never was happiness” (Alma 41:10). Let not the evil one dissuade. We can yet be guided by that still small voice—unerring in its direction and all-powerful in its influence.

Second, a quest for the good life. I speak not of the fun life, the sophisticated life, the popular life. Rather, I urge each to seek eternal life—life everlasting with mother, father, brothers, sisters, husband, wife, sons, and daughters, forever and forever together.

Third, a pledge to wage and win the war against pernicious permissiveness. As we encounter that evil carrier, the pornography beetle, let our battle standard and that of our communities be taken from that famous ensign of early America, “Don’t tread on me.”

-Thomas S. Monson, [October 1979 General Conference](#)

[W]e must not be intimidated or lose our composure even though the once morally unacceptable is becoming acceptable, as if frequency somehow conferred respectability!

One of the most subtle forms of intimidation is the gradual normalization of aberration... Today, lust openly parades as love, license cleverly poses as liberty, and raucous sounds mockingly masquerade as music. Evil even calls itself good and often gets away with it!

-Neal A. Maxwell, [April 1993 General Conference](#)

Abortion, which has increased enormously, causes one to ask, “Have we strayed so far from God’s second great commandment—love thy neighbor—that a baby in a womb no longer qualifies to be loved—at least as a mother’s neighbor?”

-Neal A. Maxwell, [April 1993 General Conference](#)

Just as foretold, our days actually are fast resembling the days of Noah, especially notable for their pattern of corruption and violence. (See Matt. 24:37; Gen. 6:11.) No wonder the adversary steadily promotes all the ancient sins, not because he is uninventive but because his harvest is so constant.

-Neal A. Maxwell, [April 1993 General Conference](#)

Pornography especially victimizes women and children. Why then the inordinate preoccupation with its protection? Pornography is better protected than citizens on the streets!

-Neal A. Maxwell, [April 1993 General Conference](#)

Even with its flaws, the family is basic, and since no other institution can compensate fully for failure in the family, why then, instead of enhancing the family, the desperate search for substitutes? Why not require family impact studies before proceeding with this program or that remedy, since of all environmental concerns the family should be first? Hundreds of governmental departments and programs protect various interests, but which one protects the family?

-Neal A. Maxwell, [April 1993 General Conference](#)

Since democracy depends upon citizens' "obedience to the unenforceable," why then the stiff resistance to moral education which could emphasize widely shared and time-tested principles?

Only reform and self-restraint, institutional and individual, can finally rescue society! Only a sufficient number of sin-resistant souls can change the marketplace. As Church members, we should be part of that sin-resistant counterculture. Instead, too many members are sliding down the slope, though perhaps at a slower pace.

-Neal A. Maxwell, [April 1993 General Conference](#)

Even during these difficult times, members "armed with righteousness" can do so many things. We can have love at home, even though the love of many waxes cold in the world. We can have inner peace even though peace has been taken from the earth.

We can keep the seventh commandment even though others break it and mock it. We can render individualized, humanitarian service even though the mass of human suffering seems so overwhelming. We can use our tongues to speak the truth in love, while refusing to use them to bear false witness. We can stand fast "in holy places" even though in the world "all things shall be in commotion."

-Neal A. Maxwell, [April 1993 General Conference](#)

Yes, "the enemy is combined," but when we are combined with the Lord's "chariots of fire," then "they that be with us are more than they that be with them"! Furthermore, the divine promise is that no weapon formed against the Lord's work shall finally prosper; this "is the heritage of the servants of the Lord."

-Neal A. Maxwell, [April 1993 General Conference](#)

[B]asic to the United Order was the private ownership of property, every man had his own property from which he might secure that which was necessary for the support of himself and his family. There is nothing in the revelations that would indicate that this property was not freely alienable at the will of the owner. It was not contemplated that the Church should own everything or that we should become in the Church, with reference to our property and otherwise, the same kind of automaton, manikin, that communism makes out of the individual, with the State standing at the head in place of the Church.

-J. Reuben Clark, [Conference Report, October 1942, pp. 55-6](#)

The fundamental principle of this system [of the United Order] was the private ownership of property. Each man owned his portion, or inheritance, or stewardship, with an absolute title, which he could alienate, or hypothecate, or otherwise treat as his own. The Church did not own all of the property, and the life under the United Order was not a communal life, as the Prophet Joseph, himself said (*History of the Church*, Volume III, p. 28). The United Order is an individualistic system, not a communal system.

-J. Reuben Clark, [Conference Report, October 1942, p. 57](#)

I have said to you before... that to me the Constitution is a part of my religion. In its place it is just as much a part of my religion as any other part. It is a part of my religion because it is one of those institutions which God has set up for His own purposes, and, as one of the brethren said today, set up so that this Church might be established, because under no other government in the world could the Church have been established as it has been established under this Government.

-J. Reuben Clark, [Conference Report, October 1942, p. 58](#)

I wish you to understand that when we begin to tamper with the Constitution, we begin to tamper with the law of Zion which God Himself set up, and no one may trifle with the word of God with impunity.

-J. Reuben Clark, [Conference Report, October 1942, p. 59](#)

Today, our duty transcends party allegiance; our duty today is allegiance to the Constitution as it was given to us by the Lord.

-J. Reuben Clark, [Conference Report, October 1942, p. 59](#)

God give us wisdom and enable us in these times of trouble and strife clearly to see our way, that we may be instrumental in sustaining the Constitution, in upholding our free institutions, our civil rights, our freedom of speech, of press, of religion, and of conscience. If we shall stand together, we shall save the Constitution, just as has been foreseen, and if we do not stand together, we cannot perform this great task.

-J. Reuben Clark, [Conference Report, October 1942, p. 59](#)

No nation has been more greatly blessed than has the United States. We live in a land which has been called choice above all other lands by divine pronouncement. The Lord has watched over it with a jealous care and has commanded its people to serve Him lest His wrath be kindled against them and His blessings be withdrawn.

-Joseph Fielding Smith, [Conference Report, April 1943, p. 11](#)

The founders of this nation were men of humble faith. Many of them saw in vision a glorious destiny for

our government, provided we would faithfully continue in the path of justice and right with contrite spirits and humble hearts, accepting the divine truths which are found in the Holy Scriptures. The appeal of these men has echoed down the passing years with prophetic warning to the succeeding generations, pleading with them to be true to all these standards which lay at the foundation of our government.

-Joseph Fielding Smith, [Conference Report, April 1943, p. 11](#)

This country was founded as a Christian nation, with the acceptance of Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of the world. It was predicted by a prophet of old that this land would be a land of liberty and it would be fortified against all other nations as long as its inhabitants would serve Jesus Christ; but should they stray from the Son of God, it would cease to be a land of liberty and His anger be kindled against them.

-Joseph Fielding Smith, [Conference Report, April 1943, p. 11](#)

The Ten Commandments are just as much the word of the Lord today as they were when written by the finger of God on Sinai. They have not been abrogated; they have not been modified and are binding upon the people with all the force which accompanied them when first uttered. As sure as we live, we are to be judged by them and all other divine commandments, for God will not permit us to mock Him and hold His laws in contempt with impunity.

-Joseph Fielding Smith, [Conference Report, April 1943, p. 12](#)

The home is the foundation of civilization and vital to the safety of our country. When the home is destroyed, the foundation of the country is in danger of destruction. Such has been the history of the past among nations.

-Joseph Fielding Smith, [Conference Report, April 1943, p. 14](#)

Throughout our land we see the tragedy of broken homes, fathers and mothers separated, children denied the natural affections. Children have a right to the blessings coming from this sacred union. They are entitled to the love and care of faithful parents and the happiness and devotion which true worship brings. When these blessings are lost, the whole community suffers and the integrity of government is weakened. It is a shame and a disgrace that so much evil is coming out of broken homes, and this comes largely because we have forgotten God and our obligations to serve and honor Him. Truly we have much room for repentance and a return to the simple worship of true Christianity.

-Joseph Fielding Smith, [Conference Report, April 1943, p. 14](#)

President Calvin Coolidge once said: "Our government rests upon religion. It is from that source that we derive our reverence for truth and justice, for equality and liberality and for the rights of mankind. Unless the people believe in these principles, they cannot believe in our government. There are only two main theories of government in the world. One rests on righteousness and the other on force. One

appeals to reason, the other appeals to the sword. One is exemplified in a republic, the other is represented by a despotism.

“The government of a country never gets ahead of the religion of a country. There is no way by which we can substitute the authority of law for the virtue of men. Of course, we can help to restrain the vicious and furnish a fair degree of security and protection by legislation and police control, but the real reform which society in these days is seeking will come as a result of religious convictions, or they will not come at all. Peace, justice, charity - these cannot be legislated into being. They are the result of Divine Grace.”

-Joseph Fielding Smith, [Conference Report, April 1943, p. 15](#)

It is true that a country cannot get ahead of its religion. The higher our ideals, the nearer we observe divine law, and the stronger are our spiritual forces. No Christian country can forsake the divinity of Jesus Christ and not suffer.

-Joseph Fielding Smith, [Conference Report, April 1943, p. 15](#)

Faith has not increased in the world, nor has righteousness, nor obedience to God. What the world needs today is to draw nearer to the Lord. We need more humble, abiding faith in our Redeemer, more love in our hearts for our Eternal Father and for our fellow men. Yes, this is a good time, a vital time—if we are to survive the forces of evil—for every man to forsake the paths of sin and turn unto the Lord who will abundantly pardon. If we will do this, we may in confidence call upon the Lord and He will be near. He will help us fight our battles to cleanse the world of despotism and make it a fit abode for all who love the principles of truth and righteousness.

-Joseph Fielding Smith, [Conference Report, April 1943, p. 16](#)

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" (Psalms 33:12). Let us make our nation all that it was destined to be, and this will come if we will humble ourselves and learn to be obedient to divine law.

-Joseph Fielding Smith, [Conference Report, April 1943, p. 16](#)

Latter-day Saints are committed to the free exercise of religion because the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation is only possible under the free exercise of religion guaranteed in our God-inspired Constitution. Thus, for us, the free exercise of religion is not just a basic and cherished principle of our Constitution; it is essential to God's plan of salvation.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [U.S. Religious Freedom Conference, 9/10/16](#)

In pursuit of that plan [of salvation], all of the children of God must be free to act upon their choices. The free exercise of religion allows all men and women to choose to develop faith in God, to worship

Him, and to act on their beliefs and choices. All of this permits the children of God to become what He wants them to become.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [U.S. Religious Freedom Conference, 9/10/16](#)

We maintain that all citizens should be supportive of religious freedom because religion is uniquely valuable to society. Persons of faith therefore maintain that religious freedom is not just a concern of religious persons. Nonbelievers have a strong interest in religious freedom because it is a strong force for peace and stability in our pluralistic world.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [U.S. Religious Freedom Conference, 9/10/16](#)

Our society is not held together primarily by law and its enforcement, but most importantly by those who voluntarily obey the unenforceable because of their internalized norms of righteous or correct behavior. For a large number of our citizens, religious belief in right and wrong is a vital influence to produce such voluntary compliance. There is, therefore, a strong public interest in the teachings of right and wrong in churches, synagogues, and mosques. It is sincere faith in God - however defined - that translates religious teachings into the moral behavior that benefits a nation.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [U.S. Religious Freedom Conference, 9/10/16](#)

Many of the most significant moral advances in Western society have been motivated by religious principles and persuaded to official adoption by pulpit-preaching and persons who had a clear religious vision of what was morally right. Examples include the abolition of the slave trade in England and the Emancipation Proclamation and the Civil Rights movement in this country.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [U.S. Religious Freedom Conference, 9/10/16](#)

[W]e maintain that political realities and the religious values and actions of believers are so interlinked in the perpetuation of our society that we cannot lose the influence of religion in our public life without seriously jeopardizing our freedoms and our prosperity. We must help nonbelievers understand this reality, because the preservation of religious freedom depends upon public understanding and support for this vital freedom.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [U.S. Religious Freedom Conference, 9/10/16](#)

Many have observed that this country is now moving strongly toward secularism, with the resulting disconnect from traditional belief in God and the idea of ultimate accountability to the Divine. With the diminishing of public esteem for religion, the guarantee of free exercise of religion seems to be weakening. Religion is surely under siege by the forces of political correctness that seek its replacement by other priorities.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [U.S. Religious Freedom Conference, 9/10/16](#)

[Some argue that] religious believers and their organizations have no First Amendment protection—not even normal free speech guarantees—because religious voices, especially in the public process of lawmaking, are simply an effort to impose religious beliefs on others, which is, of course, unprotected by the Constitution.

These arguments leave me wondering why any group of citizens with secular-based views are free to seek to persuade or impose *their* views on others by a democratic lawmaking process, but persons or organizations with religious-based views are not free to participate in the same democratic lawmaking process.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [U.S. Religious Freedom Conference, 9/10/16](#)

We should all understand that if one voice can be stilled, every other voice is potentially at risk of being silenced by a new majority that finds other arguments too “bigoted” or “hateful” for the public square.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [U.S. Religious Freedom Conference, 9/10/16](#)

One cannot seek a sensible balance between religious freedom on the one hand and nondiscrimination on the other hand without considering them also as two sides of the same coin. Neither should be considered in isolation. Both need to be furthered only with full consciousness of what is on the other side of the coin.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [U.S. Religious Freedom Conference, 9/10/16](#)

As the powerful emerging right of nondiscrimination has been accommodated in the law, many rank it above the constitutional guarantee of free exercise of religion, contending that religious freedom must be curtailed wherever it conflicts with nondiscrimination. To such I say please respect the laws that provide unique protections for believers and religious institutions. Most notable is the uniquely positioned First Amendment in the Bill of Rights, which singles out the “free exercise” of religion for special protection, along with free speech, free press, and freedom of assembly.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [U.S. Religious Freedom Conference, 9/10/16](#)

The favored constitutional treatment of religion, speech, press, and assembly is based on their paramount significance in the founding of our nation and the necessity of protecting them to perpetuate all of Americans’ freedoms. The weakening of any part of the First Amendment weakens it all. Religion has an honored and uniquely favored place in our public life. The First Amendment framers’ guarantee of “free exercise of religion” rather than just “freedom of conscience” shows an intent to extend its unique protections to *actions* in accordance with religious belief.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [U.S. Religious Freedom Conference, 9/10/16](#)

Our society has become so blinded by its quest to redress wrongful discrimination against one class of people that it is now in danger of creating another victimized class: people of faith, like you and me.

-Ronald A. Rasband, [Ensign, September 2016, p. 29](#)

For those desiring to please God, faith, patience and diligence are surely needed. Often the laws of men move outside the laws of God.

-Neil L. Andersen, [April 2019 General Conference](#)

Blessed with the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, we humbly declare that there are some things that are completely and absolutely true. These eternal truths are the same for every son and daughter of God.

-Neil L. Andersen, [April 2019 General Conference](#)

Our Father's plan ... obligates us to speak in defense of the unborn.

-Neil L. Andersen, [April 2019 General Conference](#)

With so much of sophistry that is passed off as truth, with so much of deception concerning standards and values, with so much of allurements and enticement to take on the slow stain of the world, we have felt to warn and forewarn. In furtherance of this, we of the First Presidency and the Council of the Twelve Apostles now issue a proclamation to the Church and to the world as a declaration and reaffirmation of standards, doctrines, and practices relative to the family which the prophets, seers, and revelators of this church have repeatedly stated throughout its history.

-Gordon B. Hinckley, [Introduction to The Family Proclamation, 9/23/95](#)

Throughout the world, the family is increasingly under attack. If families fail, many of our political, economic, and social systems will also fail. And if families fail, their glorious eternal potential cannot be realized.

-Russell M. Nelson, [April 2008 General Conference](#)

In this day of rampant immorality and addictive pornography, parents have a sacred responsibility to teach their children the importance of God in their lives. Those evils, so highly destructive of divine potential, are to be strictly shunned by children of God.

-Russell M. Nelson, [April 2008 General Conference](#)

What we face today is not just a cold war, not just a struggle for the control of land, sea, air, and even outer space, but total competition for the control of men's minds. Unless we meet it and defeat it, we shall almost inevitably one day face the loss of all that we hold dear.

In less than half a century, I repeat, this evil system has gained control over one-third of mankind, and it is steadily pursuing its vicious goal of control over all the rest of the world. It is time, and past time, for us to be alarmed. "Wo be unto him that is at ease. Wo be unto him that crieth, 'all is well'."

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1960, p. 102](#)

The great plan of happiness enables family relationships to last beyond the grave. Sacred ordinances and covenants, available only in the temple, make it possible for individuals to return to the presence of God and for families to be united eternally. Marriage, the family, and the home are the foundation of the Church. Nothing is more important to the Church and to civilization itself than the family!

-Boyd K. Packer, [October 2003 General Conference](#)

Satan, with his angels, will try to capture your thoughts and control what you do. If he can, he will corrupt anything that is good. To him the Internet is just that—a net to ensnare you into wicked addiction with pornography. Unhappiness will follow.

-Boyd K. Packer, [October 2003 General Conference](#)

Some work through political, social, and legal channels to redefine morality and marriage into something unrestrained, unnatural, and forbidden. But they never can change the design which has governed human life and happiness from the beginning. The deceiver preys upon some passion or tendency or weakness. He convinces them that the condition cannot be changed and recruits them for activities for which they never would volunteer.

But sooner or later that spark of divinity in each of them will ignite. They can assert their agency as sons and daughters created in the image of God and renounce the destroyer. That which they had been led to believe could not be changed, will be changed, and they will feel the power of the redemption of Christ.

-Boyd K. Packer, [October 2003 General Conference](#)

We do not set the standards, but we are commanded to teach them and maintain them. The standard remains abstinence before marriage and total fidelity in marriage. However out of step we may seem, however much the standards are belittled, however much others yield, we will not yield, we cannot yield. Obedience to the moral standard and observance of the Word of Wisdom will remain as requirements for ordination to the priesthood, for a mission, and for a temple recommend.

-Boyd K. Packer, [October 2003 General Conference](#)

Now words can be used as weapons against you. If they throw the word *diversity* at you, grab hold of it and say, “I am already diverse, and I intend to stay diverse.” If the word is *tolerance*, grab that one, too, saying, “I expect you to be tolerant of my lifestyle—obedience, integrity, abstinence, repentance.” If the word is *choice*, tell them you choose good, old-fashioned morality. You choose to be a worthy husband or wife, a worthy parent.

-Boyd K. Packer, [October 2003 General Conference](#)

The whole Church may stand alone in defense of these standards. But we are not the first...

When I was young and very new in my calling, I was sent east to meet with powerful, prominent officials who were blocking our work. As I left for the airport, I stopped to see President Harold B. Lee and asked, “Do you have any parting counsel?”

“Yes,” he said, “just remember this isn’t 1830, and there aren’t just six of us.”

-Boyd K. Packer, [October 2003 General Conference](#)

Society is on a course that has caused the destruction of civilizations and is now ripening in iniquity. Civilization itself is at stake. You, our wonderful youth, are an example to untold millions of good people worldwide. I think of the joy and happiness that await you in this life and the work you are to do, and I cannot be discouraged.

-Boyd K. Packer, [October 2003 General Conference](#)

In our day the dreadful influence of pornography is like unto a plague sweeping across the world, infecting one here and one there, relentlessly trying to invade every home, most frequently through the husband and father. The effect of this plague can be, unfortunately often is, spiritually fatal. Lucifer seeks to disrupt “the great plan of redemption,” “the great plan of happiness.”

Pornography will always repel the Spirit of Christ and will interrupt the communications between our Heavenly Father and His children and disrupt the tender relationship between husband and wife.

-Boyd K. Packer, [October 2013 General Conference](#)

The priesthood holds consummate power. It can protect you from the plague of pornography – and it is a plague – if you are succumbing to its influence. If one is obedient, the priesthood can show how to break a habit and even erase an addiction. Holders of the priesthood have that authority and should employ it to combat evil influences.

We raise an alarm and warn members of the Church to wake up and understand what is going on. Parents, be alert, ever watchful that this wickedness might threaten your family circle.

-Boyd K. Packer, [October 2013 General Conference](#)

We teach a standard of moral conduct that will protect us from Satan's many substitutes or counterfeits for marriage. We must understand that any persuasion to enter into any relationship that is not in harmony with the principles of the gospel must be wrong. From the Book of Mormon we learn that "wickedness never was happiness."

Some suppose that they were preset and cannot overcome what they feel are inborn temptations toward the impure and unnatural. Not so! Remember, God is our Heavenly Father.

-Boyd K. Packer, [October 2013 General Conference](#)

...[I]f we are not alert, there are those today who not only tolerate but advocate voting to change laws that would legalize immorality, as if a vote would somehow alter the designs of God's laws and nature. A law against nature would be impossible to enforce. For instance, what good would a vote against the law of gravity do?

-Boyd K. Packer, [October 2013 General Conference](#)

There are both moral and physical laws "irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world" that cannot be changed. History demonstrates over and over again that moral standards cannot be changed by battle and cannot be changed by ballot. To legalize that which is basically wrong or evil will not prevent the pain and penalties that will follow as surely as night follows day.

-Boyd K. Packer, [October 2013 General Conference](#)

Regardless of the opposition, we are determined to stay on course. We will hold to the principles and laws and ordinances of the gospel. If they are misunderstood either innocently or willfully, so be it. We cannot change; we will not change the moral standard. We quickly lose our way when we disobey the laws of God. If we do not protect and foster the family, civilization and our liberties must needs perish.

-Boyd K. Packer, [October 2013 General Conference](#)

It is our conviction also that the God of heaven guided the founding fathers in establishing it for his particular purpose. The founders of this republic were deeply spiritual men. They believed men are capable of self-government and that it is the job of government to protect freedom and foster private initiative.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1962, p. 103](#)

This then becomes the Lord's base of operations in these latter days. And this base will not be shifted out of its place – the land of America...

We must protect this base from complacency – from the dangerous feeling that all is well – from being lulled away into a false security. We must protect this American base from the brainwashing,

increasingly administered to our youth in many educational institutions across the land, by some misinformed instructors and some wolves in sheep's clothing. Their false indoctrination, often perpetrated behind the front of so-called academic freedom, is leaving behind many faithless students, socialist-oriented, who are easy subjects for state tyranny.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1962, pp. 104-105](#)

There's trouble ahead... Prepare for attacks from the adversary. Please protect yourself from Satan's traps, including harmful drugs and pornography.

-Russell M. Nelson, [Address given in Papeeti, Tahiti, 5/24/19](#)

There are difficult days ahead. Please protect your children. Help them to know the Lord and love Him and keep His commandments and be free from the shackles of addiction and bondage.

-Russell M. Nelson, [Address given in Apia, Samoa, 5/18/19](#)

When we covenant in the waters of baptism to "stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places," we're not talking solely about fast and testimony meetings. It may not always be easy, convenient, or politically correct to stand for truth and right, but it is always the right thing to do. Always.

-M. Russell Ballard, [October 1997 General Conference](#)

I know it is sometimes hard to stand for truth and right. Yet we need to be positive examples if we are to help others find a better way. Thankfully, we can draw strength from those who have gone before us. While the road they walked may have been different from the road we walk today, the courage required to be faithful is similar, and their experiences are instructive.

-M. Russell Ballard, [October 1997 General Conference](#)

These are difficult times in which we are living. In some respects, it is perhaps the most challenging age of all time. We want you... to know that we are aware of that. But we are also aware that God has reserved some of His strongest spirit children for these perilous days. While God's laws and standards of right and wrong are under attack at every turn, we are a great army of priesthood holders who are prepared to make a valiant stand for truth and right.

-M. Russell Ballard, [October 1997 General Conference](#)

The Book of Mormon teaches that the devil is the "author of all sin" and the founder of these secret combinations. He uses secret combinations... "from generation to generation according as he can get

hold upon the hearts of the children of men.” His purpose is to destroy individuals, families, communities, and nations. To a degree, he was successful during Book of Mormon times. And he is having far too much success today. That’s why it is so important for us as priesthood holders to take a firm stand for truth and right by doing what we can to help keep our communities safe.

-M. Russell Ballard, [October 1997 General Conference](#)

Parents bear the first and greatest responsibility to teach their children principles of gospel living and good citizenship.

-M. Russell Ballard, [October 1997 General Conference](#)

We should also support the efforts of individuals, organizations, communities, and governments to assist them and help prevent crime. We should work within our respective legal and judicial systems to enact and enforce laws that provide necessary protection against criminals while ensuring essential rights and freedoms. And we should volunteer to support and assist government leaders in promoting programs designed to protect and strengthen families and communities.

-M. Russell Ballard, [October 1997 General Conference](#)

[S]urely we have as a congregation already thrust ourselves into the most serious and most eternal of issues. The war is on, and we have conspicuously enlisted. And certainly it is a war worth waging. But we are foolish, fatally foolish, if we believe it will be a casual or convenient thing. We are foolish if we think it will demand nothing of us... I truly believe there can be no casual Christians, for if we are not watchful and resolute, we will become in the heat of battle a Christian “casualty.”

-Jeffrey R. Holland, [BYU, 1/13/87](#)

When our time in mortality is complete, what experiences will we be able to share about our own contribution to this significant period of our lives and to the furthering of the Lord’s work? Will we be able to say that we rolled up our sleeves and labored with all our heart, might, mind, and strength? Or will we have to admit that our role was mostly that of an observer?

-Dieter F. Uchtdorf, [April 2014 General Conference](#)

When gospel principles get unpopular or unprofitable or very difficult to live, will we stand by them “for the duration”? That is the question our experiences in Latter-day Saint life seem most determined to answer. What do we really believe, and how true to that are we really willing to live?

-Jeffrey R. Holland, [BYU, 1/13/87](#)

I say to all and especially the youth of the Church that if you haven't already, you will one day find yourself called upon to defend your faith or perhaps even endure some personal abuse simply because you are a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Such moments will require both courage and courtesy on your part.

-Jeffrey R. Holland, [April 2014 General Conference](#)

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," Jesus cried, "thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

And therein lies a message for every young man and young woman in this Church. You may wonder if it is worth it to take a courageous moral stand in high school or to go on a mission only to have your most cherished beliefs reviled or to strive against much in society that sometimes ridicules a life of religious devotion. Yes, it is worth it, because the alternative is to have our "houses" left unto us "desolate" – desolate individuals, desolate families, desolate neighborhoods, and desolate nations.

-Jeffrey R. Holland, [April 2014 General Conference](#)

Sadly enough, my young friends, it is a characteristic of our age that if people want any gods at all, they want them to be gods who do not demand much, comfortable gods, smooth gods who not only don't rock the boat but don't even row it, gods who pat us on the head, make us giggle, then tell us to run along and pick marigolds. Talk about man creating God in his own image!

-Jeffrey R. Holland, [April 2014 General Conference](#)

And what of those who just want to look at sin or touch it from a distance? Jesus said with a flash, if your eye offends you, pluck it out. If your hand offends you, cut it off. "I came not to [bring] peace, but a sword," He warned those who thought He spoke only soothing platitudes. No wonder that, sermon after sermon, the local communities "pray[ed] him to depart out of their coasts." No wonder, miracle after miracle, His power was attributed not to God but to the devil. It is obvious that the bumper sticker question "What would Jesus do?" will not always bring a popular response.

-Jeffrey R. Holland, [April 2014 General Conference](#)

Christlike love is the greatest need we have on this planet in part because righteousness was always supposed to accompany it. So if love is to be our watchword, as it *must* be, then by the word of Him who is love personified, we must forsake transgression and any hint of advocacy for it in others. Jesus clearly understood what many in our modern culture seem to forget: that there is a crucial difference between the commandment to forgive sin (which He had an infinite capacity to do) and the warning against condoning it (which He never ever did even once).

-Jeffrey R. Holland, [April 2014 General Conference](#)

Be strong. Live the gospel faithfully even if others around you don't live it at all. Defend your beliefs with courtesy and with compassion, but defend them.

-Jeffrey R. Holland, [April 2014 General Conference](#)

A long history of inspired voices... point you toward the path of Christian discipleship. It is a strait path, and it is a narrow path without a great deal of latitude at some points, but it can be thrillingly and successfully traveled, "with ... steadfastness in Christ, ... a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men." In courageously pursuing such a course, you will forge unshakable faith, you will find safety against ill winds that blow, even shafts in the whirlwind, and you will feel the rock-like strength of our Redeemer, upon whom if you build your unflagging discipleship, you *cannot* fall.

-Jeffrey R. Holland, [April 2014 General Conference](#)

In such times as we are in, whether the threats be global or local or in individual lives, I too pray for the children. Some days it seems that a sea of temptation and transgression inundates them, simply washes over them before they can successfully withstand it, before they should have to face it. And often at least some of the forces at work seem beyond our personal control. Well, some of them may be beyond our control, but I testify with faith in the living God that they are not beyond His. He lives, and priesthood power is at work on both sides of the veil.

-Jeffrey R. Holland, [April 2003 General Conference](#)

In doing our part, we can live the gospel and defend its principles. We can declare to others the sure Way, the saving Truth, the joyful Life. We can personally repent in any way we need to repent, and when we have done all, we can pray.

-Jeffrey R. Holland, [April 2003 General Conference](#)

I speak carefully and lovingly to any of the adults of the Church, parents or otherwise, who may be given to cynicism or skepticism, who in matters of whole-souled devotion always seem to hang back a little, who at the Church's doctrinal campsite always like to pitch their tents out on the periphery of religious faith. To all such – whom we do love and wish were more comfortable camping nearer to us – I say, please be aware that the full price to be paid for such a stance does not always come due in your lifetime. No, sadly, some elements of this can be a kind of profligate national debt, with payments coming out of your children's and grandchildren's pockets in far more expensive ways than you ever intended it to be.

-Jeffrey R. Holland, [April 2003 General Conference](#)

Parents simply cannot flirt with skepticism or cynicism, then be surprised when their children expand that flirtation into full-blown romance. If in matters of faith and belief children are at risk of being swept downstream by this intellectual current or that cultural rapid, we as their parents must be more certain than ever to hold to anchored, unmistakable moorings clearly recognizable to those of our own

household. It won't help anyone if we go over the edge with them, explaining through the roar of the falls all the way down that we really did know the Church was true and that the keys of the priesthood really were lodged there but we just didn't want to stifle anyone's freedom to think otherwise. No, we can hardly expect the children to get to shore safely if the parents don't seem to know where to anchor their own boat.

-Jeffrey R. Holland, [April 2003 General Conference](#)

To lead a child (or anyone else!), even inadvertently, away from faithfulness, away from loyalty and bedrock belief simply because we want to be clever or independent is license no parent nor any other person has ever been given. In matters of religion a skeptical mind is not a higher manifestation of virtue than is a believing heart, and analytical deconstruction in the field of, say, literary fiction can be just plain old-fashioned destruction when transferred to families yearning for faith at home. And such a deviation from the true course can be deceptively slow and subtle in its impact.

-Jeffrey R. Holland, [April 2003 General Conference](#)

Even as we must live with the marriage laws and other traditions of a declining world, those who strive for exaltation must make personal choices in family life according to the Lord's way whenever that differs from the world's way.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [October 2017 General Conference](#)

Inevitably, the actions of those who try to follow God's plan of salvation can cause misunderstanding or even conflict with family members or friends who do not believe its principles. Such conflict is always so. Every generation that has sought to follow God's plan has had challenges. Anciently, the prophet Isaiah gave strength to the Israelites, whom he called "ye that know righteousness, ... in whose heart is my law." To them he said, "Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings" (Isaiah 51:7; see also 2 Nephi 8:7). But whatever the cause of conflict with those who do not understand or believe God's plan, those who do understand are always commanded to choose the Lord's way instead of the world's way.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [October 2017 General Conference](#)

Converted Latter-day Saints believe that the family proclamation, issued nearly a quarter century ago and now translated into scores of languages, is the Lord's reemphasis of the gospel truths we need to sustain us through current challenges to the family.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [October 2017 General Conference](#)

Forty years ago, President Ezra Taft Benson taught that "every generation has its tests and its chance to stand and prove itself." I believe our attitude toward and use of the family proclamation is one of those tests for this generation. I pray for all Latter-day Saints to stand firm in that test.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [October 2017 General Conference](#)

We must be vigilant in a world which has moved so far from that which is spiritual. It is essential that we reject anything that does not conform to our standards, refusing in the process to surrender that which we desire most: eternal life in the kingdom of God. The storms will still beat at our doors from time to time, for they are an inescapable part of our existence in mortality. We, however, will be far better equipped to deal with them, to learn from them, and to overcome them if we have the gospel at our core and the love of the Savior in our hearts.

-Thomas S. Monson, [October 2011 General Conference](#)

As the winds of change swirl around us and the moral fiber of society continues to disintegrate before our very eyes, may we remember the Lord's precious promise to those who trust in Him: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

-Thomas S. Monson, [October 2011 General Conference](#)

Also evolving at a rapid rate has been the moral compass of society. Behaviors which once were considered inappropriate and immoral are now not only tolerated but also viewed by ever so many as acceptable... Although the world has changed, the laws of God remain constant. They have not changed; they will not change. The Ten Commandments are just that – commandments. They are *not* suggestions. They are every bit as requisite today as they were when God gave them to the children of Israel.

-Thomas S. Monson, [October 2011 General Conference](#)

We will not always be safe from the adversary's influence, even within our own homes. We need to protect our nestlings. In order to do that, we must first acknowledge that Satan, the devil, lives; what his purposes are; what his intentions would be; and what our defenses should be.

-Boyd K. Packer, [BYU, 8/18/09](#)

In 1995 that great document "The Family: A Proclamation to the World" was prepared by all members of the First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. It speaks of gender set before birth to be protected and never defiled.

The hope is that Latter-day Saints will recognize the transcendent importance of the family and live in such a spiritually attentive way that the adversary cannot steal into the home and carry away the children...

-Boyd K. Packer, [BYU, 8/18/09](#)

Pro-choice slogans have been particularly seductive to Latter-day Saints because we know that moral agency, which can be described as the power of choice, is a fundamental necessity in the gospel plan. All Latter-day Saints are pro-choice according to that theological definition. But being pro-choice on the need for moral agency does not end the matter for us. Choice is a method, not the ultimate goal. We are accountable for our choices, and only righteous choices will move us toward our eternal goals.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU, 2/9/99](#)

The Church opposes elective abortion for personal or social convenience. Our members are taught that, subject only to some very rare exceptions, they must not submit to, perform, encourage, pay for, or arrange for an abortion... [I]n today's world we are not true to our teachings if we are merely pro-choice. We must stand up for the *right* choice. Those who persist in refusing to think beyond slogans and sound bites like pro-choice wander from the goals they pretend to espouse and wind up giving their support to results they might not support if those results were presented without disguise.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU, 2/9/99](#)

[C]onception by incest or rape – the circumstance most commonly cited by those who use exceptions to argue for abortion on demand – are involved in only a tiny minority of abortions. More than 95 percent of the millions of abortions performed each year extinguish the life of a fetus conceived by consensual relations. Thus, the effect in over 95 percent of abortions is not to vindicate choice but to avoid its consequences. Using arguments of “choice” to try to justify altering the consequences of choice is a classic case of omitting what the Savior called “the weightier matters of the law.”

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU, 2/9/99](#)

[S]ome reach the pro-choice position by saying we should not legislate morality. Those who take this position should realize that the law of crimes legislates nothing but morality. Should we repeal all laws with a moral basis so our government will not punish any choices some persons consider immoral? Such an action would wipe out virtually all of the laws against crimes.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU, 2/9/99](#)

If we say we are anti-abortion in our personal life but pro-choice in public policy, we are saying that we will not use our influence to establish public policies that encourage righteous choices on matters God's servants have defined as serious sins. I urge Latter-day Saints who have taken that position to ask themselves which other grievous sins should be decriminalized or smiled on by the law on this theory that persons should not be hampered in their choices. Should we decriminalize or lighten the legal consequences of child abuse? of cruelty to animals? of pollution? of fraud? of fathers who choose to abandon their families for greater freedom or convenience?

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU, 2/9/99](#)

In short, we preach unity among the community of Saints and tolerance toward the personal differences that are inevitable in the beliefs and conduct of a diverse population. Tolerance obviously requires a non-contentious manner of relating toward one another's differences. But tolerance does not require abandoning one's standards or one's opinions on political or public policy choices. Tolerance is a way of reacting to diversity, not a command to insulate it from examination.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU, 2/9/99](#)

Strong calls for diversity in the public sector sometimes have the effect of pressuring those holding majority opinions to abandon fundamental values to accommodate the diverse positions of those in the minority. Usually this does not substitute a minority value for a majority one. Rather, it seeks to achieve "diversity" by abandoning the official value position altogether, so that no one's value will be contradicted by an official or semiofficial position. The result of this abandonment is not a diversity of values but an official anarchy of values.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU, 2/9/99](#)

There are hundreds of examples of... where achieving the goal of diversity results in the anarchy of values we call moral relativism. These examples include such varied proposals as forbidding the public schools to teach the wrongfulness of certain behavior or the rightfulness of patriotism and includes attempting to banish a representation of the Ten Commandments from any public buildings.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [BYU, 2/9/99](#)

We praise what the pioneers' unselfishness and sacrifice have done for us, but that is not enough. We should also assure that these same qualities are guiding principles for each of us as we have opportunities to sacrifice for our nations, our families, our quorums, our members, and our Church. This is especially important in societies that have exalted personal interest and individual rights to the point where these values seem to erase the principles of individual responsibility and sacrifice.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [October 1997 General Conference](#)

Many of our challenges are different from those faced by former pioneers but perhaps just as dangerous and surely as significant to our own salvation and the salvation of those who follow us. For example, as for life-threatening obstacles, the wolves that prowled around pioneer settlements were no more dangerous to their children than the drug dealers or pornographers who threaten our children. Similarly, the early pioneers' physical hunger posed no greater threat to their well-being than the spiritual hunger experienced by many in our day. The children of earlier pioneers were required to do incredibly hard physical work to survive their environment. That was no greater challenge than many of our young people now face from the absence of hard work, which results in spiritually corrosive challenges to discipline, responsibility, and self-worth.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [October 1997 General Conference](#)

While we strive for the virtue of tolerance, other commendable qualities need not be lost. Tolerance does not require the surrender of noble purpose or of individual identity. The Lord gave instruction to leaders of His restored church to establish and maintain institutional integrity – that the church may stand independent.

-Russell M. Nelson, [April 1994 General Conference](#)

In former days, disciples of the Lord “were firm, and would suffer even unto death rather than commit sin.” In latter days, devoted disciples of the Lord are just as firm. Real love for the sinner may compel courageous confrontation – not acquiescence! Real love does not support self-destructing behavior.

-Russell M. Nelson, [April 1994 General Conference](#)

[I]n discussing [tolerance], we must recognize at the outset that there is a difference between *tolerance* and *tolerate*. Your gracious tolerance for an individual does not grant him or her license to do wrong, nor does your tolerance obligate you to tolerate his or her misdeed. That distinction is fundamental to an understanding of this vital virtue.

-Russell M. Nelson, [April 1994 General Conference](#)

Through the years we learn that challenges to our faith are not new, and they aren’t likely to disappear soon. But *true disciples of Christ see opportunity in the midst of opposition*.

-Robert D. Hales, [October 2008 General Conference](#)

To be meek, as defined in Webster’s dictionary, is “manifesting patience and longsuffering: enduring injury without resentment.” Meekness is not weakness. It is a badge of Christian courage.

-Robert D. Hales, [October 2008 General Conference](#)

We cannot change the doctrines of the restored gospel, even if teaching and obeying them makes us unpopular in the eyes of the world. Yet even as we feel to speak the word of God with boldness, we must pray to be filled with the Holy Ghost. We should never confuse boldness with Satan’s counterfeit: overbearance. True disciples speak with quiet confidence, not boastful pride.

-Robert D. Hales, [October 2008 General Conference](#)

Satan has raised a Korihor-like banner in our day with increasing success. What are some of his tools? Seductive romance novels, TV soap operas, married women and old boyfriends connecting on social media, and pornography. We must be so careful! We cannot play with Satan’s fiery darts and not get burned. I know of nothing that will qualify us for the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost as much as virtue.

-Linda S. Reeves, [October 2015 General Conference](#)

Next to being one in worshipping God, there is nothing in this world upon which this Church should be more united than in upholding and defending the Constitution of the United States!

-David O. McKay, 1956, [The Instructor, 91:34](#)

Also found in [Conference Report, October 1939, p. 105](#)

Latter-day Saints should have nothing to do with secret combinations and groups antagonistic to the constitutional law of the land, which the Lord “suffered to be established,” and which “should be maintained for the rights and protection of all flesh, according to just and holy principles.”

-David O. McKay, 1956, [The Instructor, 91:34](#)

Satan is making war against all the wisdom that has come to men through their ages of experience. He is seeking to overturn and destroy the very foundations upon which society, government, and religion rest. He aims to have men adopt theories and practices which he induced their forefathers, over the ages, to adopt and try, only to be discarded by them when found unsound, impractical, and ruinous. He plans to destroy liberty and freedom—economic, political, and religious, and to set up in place thereof the greatest, most widespread, and most complete tyranny that has ever oppressed man. He is working under such perfect disguise that many do not recognize either him or his methods. There is no crime he would not commit, no debauchery he would not send, no heart he would not break, no life he would not take, no soul he would not destroy. He comes as a thief in the night; he is a wolf in sheep’s clothing. Without their knowing it, the people are being urged down paths that lead only to destruction. Satan never before had so firm a grip on this generation as he has now.

-Message of the First Presidency, 1942, [The Improvement Era, 45:761](#)

The Lord has Himself organized us for this great conflict against unrighteousness, foreseen from before the foundations of the earth were laid. He has prescribed the rules and regulations for our government while in this field of action. He has placed at our head His mouthpiece on earth and has given him full authority to direct us in this conflict. He who disobeys or dishonors that head is a traitor to the Lord’s cause.

-Message of the First Presidency, 1942, [The Improvement Era, 45:762](#)

We condemn the outcome which wicked and designing men are now planning, namely: the worldwide establishment and perpetuation of some form of Communism on the one side, or of some form of Nazism or Fascism on the other. Each of these systems destroys liberty, wipes out free institutions, blots out free agency, stifles free press and free speech, crushes out freedom of religion and conscience. Free peoples cannot and do not survive under these systems. Free peoples the world over will view with horror the establishment of either Communism or Nazism as a worldwide system. Each system is

fostered by those who deny the right and the ability of the common people to govern themselves. We proclaim that the common people have both this right and this ability.

-Message of the First Presidency, 1942, [The Improvement Era, 45:764](#)

In a paradoxical period when violating the sanctity of human life is heralded as a right and chaos is described as liberty, how blessed we are to live in this latter-day dispensation when restored gospel light can shine brightly in our lives and help us to discern the adversary's dark deceptions and distractions.

"For they that are wise and have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide, and have not been deceived - verily I say unto you, they shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire, but shall abide the day."

-David A. Bednar, [October 2019 General Conference](#)

[S]piritual complacency and casualness make us vulnerable to the advances of the adversary. Spiritual thoughtlessness invites great danger into our lives.

Nephi described how in the latter days Satan would attempt to pacify and lull the children of God into a false sense of "carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and *thus the devil cheateth their souls*, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell."

Constant vigilance is required to counteract complacency and casualness.

-David A. Bednar, [October 2019 General Conference](#)

[M]y dear sisters, your ability to discern truth from error, to be society's guardians of morality, is crucial in these latter days. And we depend upon you to teach others to do likewise. Let me be very clear about this: if the world loses the moral rectitude of its women, the world will *never* recover.

-Russell M. Nelson, [October 2019 General Conference](#)

I can't really tell you much you don't already know about the evils of pornography—so I will tell you some things you do know: That there is steadily, inexorably, unendingly more of it, that it is easier than ever for everyone, including children, to access, and that it continues to rend the very moral fabric of our society whether that be the family, the community, the state or the nation. That is because in every case, it rends the moral fabric of each individual who views it or otherwise participates in its production or distribution.

-Jeffrey R. Holland, [Utah Coalition Against Pornography, 3/12/16](#)

Whatever the laws of man may come to tolerate, the misuse of the power of procreation, the destroying of innocent life through abortion, and the abuse of little children are transgressions of enormous proportion. For cradled therein rests the destiny of innocent, helpless children.

-Boyd K. Packer, [October 1986 General Conference](#)

Now, we have not been using the Book of Mormon as we should. Our homes are not as strong unless we are using it to bring our children to Christ. Our families may be corrupted by worldly trends and teachings unless we know how to use the book to expose and combat the falsehoods in socialism, organic evolution, rationalism, humanism, etc... And our nation will continue to degenerate unless we read and heed the words of the God of this land, Jesus Christ, and quit building up and upholding the secret combinations which the Book of Mormon tells us proved the downfall of both previous American civilizations.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [April 1975 General Conference](#)

I testify that as the forces of evil increase under Lucifer's leadership and as the forces of good increase under the leadership of Jesus Christ, there will be growing battles between the two until the final confrontation. As the issues become clearer and more obvious, all mankind will eventually be required to align themselves either for the kingdom of God or for the kingdom of the devil. As these conflicts rage, either secretly or openly, the righteous will be tested. God's wrath will soon shake the nations of the earth and will be poured out on the wicked without measure. But God will provide strength for the righteous and the means of escape; and eventually and finally truth will triumph.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [October 1988 General Conference](#)

It is time for us, as members of the Church, to walk in all the ways of the Lord, to use our influence to make popular that which is sound and to make unpopular that which is unsound. We have the scriptures, the prophets, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Now we need eyes that will see, ears that will hear, and hearts that will hearken to God's direction.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [October 1988 General Conference](#)

But there are developing tendencies, sponsored by selfishness, greed, and ambition that, if unchecked, will soon or late bring sorrow and ruin to our country. Among these tendencies is that of "something for nothing," at least "more and more for less and less"—more pay for less work. And as I see it, in whatever words these tendencies are expressed, they all lead to some type of national socialism. And generally, socialism is an enemy of free enterprise in the development of which, I repeat, this country has become the greatest on earth. Then why does any honest, patriotic, intelligent citizen of America prefer socialism to free enterprise? Is it not in free enterprise that free agency, a divine gift to every human being, finds an environment favorable to growth and development and to living in harmony with our beautiful doctrine of eternal progression?

-Joseph F. Merrill, [Conference Report, April 1950, p. 60](#)

America has become great in many lines of human endeavor, in fact the greatest nation on earth, due unquestionably to its free enterprise or capitalistic system.

-Joseph F. Merrill, [Conference Report, April 1950, p. 59](#)

Men are often asked to express an opinion on a myriad of government proposals and projects. All too often, answers appear to be based not upon solid principle, but upon the popularity of the specific government program in question. Seldom are men willing to oppose a popular program if they, themselves, wish to be popular – especially if they seek public office. Such an approach to vital political questions of the day can only lead to confusion and legislative chaos. Decisions of this nature should be based upon and measured against certain basic principles regarding the proper role of government. If principles are correct, then they can be applied to any specific proposal with confidence. **Unlike the political opportunist, the true statesman values principle above popularity, and works to create popularity for those political principles which are wise and just.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [“The Proper Role of Government,” BYU, 10/21/68](#)

Since God created man with certain unalienable rights, and man, in turn, created government to help secure and safeguard those rights, it follows that man is superior to the creature which he created. Man is superior to government, and should remain master over it, not the other way around.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [“The Proper Role of Government,” BYU, 10/21/68](#)

The world largely ignores the first and great commandment – to love God – but talks a lot about loving their brother. They worship at the altar of man... When we fail to put the love of God first, we are easily deceived by crafty men who profess a great love of humanity, while advocating programs that are not of the Lord.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1967, p. 35](#)

As far back as 1928, the Communists declared that the cultural, economic, and social differences between the races in America could be exploited by them to create the animosity, fear, and hatred between large segments of our people that would be necessary beginning ingredients for their revolution. Briefly, the three broad objectives were and are as follows:

1. Create hatred
2. Trigger violence
3. Overthrow established government.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, October 1967, pp. 35-36](#)

Drawing proper lines to protect both public health and religious exercise in a pandemic is very challenging. But we cannot deny and we should not forget the speed and intensity with which government power was used to shut down fundamental aspects of religious exercise. These decisions

and regulations were unprecedented. For nearly two months, Americans and many others throughout the free world learned firsthand what it means for government to directly prohibit the free exercise of religion.

-David A. Bednar, [Religious Freedom Annual Review, 6/17/20](#)

Constitutions, representative government, checks and balances, and the rule of law help constrain the tendency of government to exercise unlimited power. Of course, liberty has limits. Government has a just role in fostering a moral environment in which people can live good and honorable lives. But whatever else government officials may be called upon to do, we the people must never allow them to forget that their offices and powers exist to secure our fundamental freedoms and the conditions for exercising those freedoms.

-David A. Bednar, [Religious Freedom Annual Review, 6/17/20](#)

[D]espite the obvious need for a proper response to COVID-19, we must not become accustomed to sweeping assertions of governmental power. Invoking emergency powers, government executives summarily imposed numerous orders and directives that in many ways are analogous to martial law. These executive orders are unlike laws enacted through the ordinary give-and-take of the democratic process.

-David A. Bednar, [Religious Freedom Annual Review, 6/17/20](#)

No doubt an emergency on the scale of COVID-19 justifies strong measures to protect the public, but we cannot lose sight of the fact that many of these measures are extraordinary assertions of governmental power that can dramatically constrain our basic freedoms. The power of government must have limits.

-David A. Bednar, [Religious Freedom Annual Review, 6/17/20](#)

The freedom of religion properly has been called our first freedom. It is first not only because of its placement as the first right in the First Amendment, but also because of the paramount importance of respecting the moral agency of each person. Living even for a brief few weeks under the restrictions imposed on religious activity by COVID-19 is a stark reminder that nothing is more precious to people of faith than the freedom to “worship Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience” and to openly and freely live according to our convictions.

-David A. Bednar, [Religious Freedom Annual Review, 6/17/20](#)

Religious liberty is one of the “just and holy principles” (D&C 101:77) underlying the Constitution of the United States. That liberty draws from and in turn reinforces the other rights protected by the First Amendment—the right to speak freely, to make use of a free press, to peaceably gather with others, and to petition the government to redress grievances.

-David A. Bednar, [Religious Freedom Annual Review, 6/17/20](#)

Freedom of religion stands as a bulwark against unlimited government power. It safeguards the right to think for oneself, to believe what one feels to be true, and to exercise moral agency accordingly. It secures the space necessary to live with faith, integrity, and devotion. It nurtures strong families. It protects communities of faith and the rich and sacred relationships they make possible.

-David A. Bednar, [Religious Freedom Annual Review, 6/17/20](#)

Nothing government does is more important than fostering the conditions wherein religion can flourish.

-David A. Bednar, [Religious Freedom Annual Review, 6/17/20](#)

As we have just experienced, religious freedom can quickly be swept aside in the name of protecting other societal interests. Despite COVID-19 risks, North American jurisdictions declared as essential numerous services related to alcohol, animals, marijuana, and other concerns. But often religious organizations and their services were simply deemed nonessential, even when their activities could be conducted safely. In the name of protecting physical health and security or advancing other social values, government often acted without regard to the importance of protecting spiritual health and security. It often seemed to forget that securing religious freedom is as vital as physical health.

-David A. Bednar, [Religious Freedom Annual Review, 6/17/20](#)

[W]e can no more disregard the valid claims of religious freedom in a time of crisis than we can disregard the valid claims of freedom of speech, freedom of the press, or freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures. Nor should we prioritize secular interests above religious ones. A health crisis should not become an excuse for a religious freedom crisis. I believe we must always remember a key principle: specifically, religion should not be treated less favorably than analogous secular activities.

-David A. Bednar, [Religious Freedom Annual Review, 6/17/20](#)

The COVID-19 crisis has presented us with a unique opportunity to reaffirm and shore up religious freedom. We have witnessed the government's swift, well-intentioned, but often dangerous breaching of the boundaries that protect the free exercise of religion. Do we hear the buzzer on the alarm clock? This is a wake-up call for all of us. Those fundamental boundaries and protections must be healed, renewed, and fortified.

-David A. Bednar, [Religious Freedom Annual Review, 6/17/20](#)

While believers and their religious organizations must be good citizens in a time of crisis, never again can we allow government officials to treat the exercise of religion as simply nonessential. Never again must the fundamental right to worship God be trivialized below the ability to buy gasoline.

-David A. Bednar, [Religious Freedom Annual Review, 6/17/20](#)

In our understandable desire to combat COVID-19, we, too, as a society may have forgotten something about who we are and what is most precious. Perhaps we have not fully remembered that faith and the right to exercise it are central to our identity as believers and to all that we deem good and right and worthy of protection. Now is the time for us to heed the wake-up call, to remember, and to act. That we may do so is my hope and my earnest prayer.

-David A. Bednar, [Religious Freedom Annual Review, 6/17/20](#)

In a revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Savior declared, “I established the Constitution of this land, by the hands of wise men whom I raised up unto this very purpose” (D&C 101:80). These were not ordinary men, but men chosen and held in reserve by the Lord for this very purpose.

-President Ezra Taft Benson, [BYU, 9/16/86](#)

The Declaration of Independence to which these great men affixed their signatures is much more than a political document. It constitutes a spiritual manifesto—revelation, if you will—declaring not for this nation only, but for all nations, the source of man’s rights.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [October 1976 General Conference](#)

In our doctrine we believe that in the host country for the Restoration, the United States, the U.S. Constitution and related documents, written by imperfect men, were inspired by God to bless all people. As we read in the Doctrine and Covenants, these documents were “established, and should be maintained for the rights and protection *of all flesh*, according to just and holy principles.”

-Quentin L. Cook, [October 2020 General Conference](#)

...I think it safe to say that when people turn from a sense of accountability to God and begin to trust instead in the “arm of flesh,” disaster lurks. Trusting in the arm of flesh is to ignore the divine Author of human rights and human dignity and to give highest priority to riches, power, and the praise of the world (while often mocking and persecuting those who follow a different standard). Meanwhile, those in sustainable societies are seeking, as King Benjamin said, to “grow in the knowledge of the glory of him that created [them], or in the knowledge of that which is just and true.”

-D. Todd Christofferson, [October 2020 General Conference](#)

The institutions of family and religion have been crucial for endowing both individuals and communities with the virtues that sustain an enduring society. These virtues, rooted in scripture, include integrity, responsibility and accountability, compassion, marriage and fidelity in marriage, respect for others and the property of others, service, and the necessity and dignity of work, among others.

-D. Todd Christofferson, [October 2020 General Conference](#)

...[W]hen secularization separates personal and civic virtue from a sense of accountability to God, it cuts the plant from its roots. Reliance on culture and tradition alone will not be sufficient to sustain virtue in society. When one has no higher god than himself and seeks no greater good than satisfying his own appetites and preferences, the effects will be manifest in due course.

-D. Todd Christofferson, [October 2020 General Conference](#)

There is much we can do as neighbors and fellow citizens to contribute to the sustainability and success of the societies we live in, and surely our most fundamental and enduring service will be to teach and live by the truths inherent in God's great plan of redemption... If enough of us and enough of our neighbors strive to make our decisions and guide our lives by the truth of God, the moral virtues needed in every society will abound.

-D. Todd Christofferson, [October 2020 General Conference](#)

Some Church members opine that emergency plans and supplies, food storage, and 72-hour kits must not be important anymore because the Brethren have not spoken recently and extensively about these and related topics in general conference. But repeated admonitions to prepare have been proclaimed by leaders of the Church for decades. The consistency of prophetic counsel over time creates a powerful concert of clarity and a warning volume far louder than solo performances can ever produce.

-David A. Bednar, [October 2020 General Conference](#)

An essential part of loving our enemies is to render unto Caesar by keeping the laws of our various countries... This does not mean that we agree with all that is done with the force of law. It means that we obey the current law and use peaceful means to change it. It also means that we peacefully accept the results of elections. We will not participate in the violence threatened by those disappointed with the outcome. In a democratic society we always have the opportunity and the duty to persist peacefully until the next election.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [October 2020 General Conference](#)

...[S]ome seem to have forgotten that the First Amendment to the United States Constitution guarantees the "right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." That is the authorized way to raise public awareness and to focus on injustices in the content or administration of the laws.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [October 2020 General Conference](#)

[Some] seem to have forgotten that the protests protected by the Constitution are *peaceful* protests. Protesters have no right to destroy, deface, or steal property or to undermine the government's legitimate police powers. The Constitution and laws contain no invitation to revolution or anarchy. All of us—police, protesters, supporters, and spectators—should understand the limits of our rights and the

importance of our duties to stay within the boundaries of existing law. Abraham Lincoln was right when he said, "There is no grievance that is a fit object of redress by mob law." Redress of grievances by mobs is redress by illegal means. That is anarchy, a condition that has no effective governance and no formal police, which undermines rather than protects individual rights.

-Dallin H. Oaks, [October 2020 General Conference](#)

There are people today all over the world who in their own courageous and sometimes quiet way are working for freedom. In many cases we will never know until the next life all they sacrificed for liberty. These patriots are receiving heaven's applause for the role they are playing, and in the long run that applause will be louder and longer than any they could receive in this world.

-Ezra Taft Benson, *An Enemy Hath Done This*, p. 61

We are here, we say, under the best government in the world ... which was established under the inspiration of the Lord Himself, and I believe it; we are citizens of that government. I never have been able to conceive that it is possible for me to be an acceptable member of the Church in the sight of God, my Father, except that I am a devoted supporter of my country and its institutions, honoring, obeying, and sustaining its laws, and just as I labor for the spread of the truth, just as I seek to bring people to a knowledge of it, so is it my duty to labor for the establishment of righteous government in the land in which I live.

-Anthony W. Ivins, [Conference Report, April 1915, pp. 113-114](#)

The Church and the State are so intimately associated that in my mind I cannot separate them, for I believe that without the State the Church could accomplish little, and that without the influence of religion, those restraining influences which come through faith in God, and acknowledgement of our Redeemer as the Savior of the world, it is at least an exceedingly difficult thing that good government may be established and maintained in the world. So I must labor for better citizenship.

-Anthony W. Ivins, [Conference Report, April 1915, p. 114](#)

Are the God-given liberties which are guaranteed under our constitution to be trampled under foot, and the great work which has been accomplished since the restoration of the gospel of Christ destroyed by ruthless men who honor neither God, man, nor religion? These things are in the balance, the wage of battle is on, these great questions are to be decided one way or the other. If we love them, if we are determined in our hearts that they shall not perish from the earth, it remains for us not only to live for them, but if necessary to die for them, as men who have lived before us have done.

-Anthony W. Ivins, [Conference Report, April 1917, p. 54](#)

We as a people believe in honoring and sustaining the law. We recognize the absolute necessity of upholding the fundamental laws of our land if progress, if advancement, if the integrity of the nation

itself are to be maintained. The evils of which society now most complains are the evils that result from the failure on the part of men to consider that they have any obligation to the law. They are a law unto themselves... Their covenants, their compacts, their contracts are worthless. They keep them only when it is expedient to keep them. They subserve only their selfish interests. They have not been taught the fundamental necessity of obedience, to preserve not only the law of God, but the law of men. They have not been taught respect for person or property; and such respect as has been yielded, in many cases, has only been the respect that has been enforced by external processes. There can never be a great citizenship that comes from the mere force, external force of law. You cannot superimpose the duties of citizenship in order to make a great people. The obligations of citizenship, the love of country and patriotism must come from within and not be imposed from without.

-Stephen L. Richards, [Conference Report, October 1919, p. 102-3](#)

...[A]s I see it, the great need of the hour is the need for systematic training for men and women and children in the fundamental obligations of citizenship and the fundamental obligations that pertain to their life in this world. The great questions — Who are we? Where did we come from? Where are we going? have been left out of consideration in our educational processes. It has not made any difference who we were, where we came from, or where we are going. Our education has been a commercialized one. We have thought to stimulate the industrial, the financial, and to gain prestige from a worldly standpoint. While, thank the Lord, there has remained in this great land something of the spirit of the fathers, something of the great love of liberty, unfortunately there has not been sufficient of it to curtail the selfishness, the mercenary and the ulterior motives of a great part of this country.

-Stephen L. Richards, [Conference Report, October 1919, p. 103](#)

The Prophet Joseph told us that he saw the day when even the Constitution of the United States would be torn and hang as by a thread. But, thank the Lord, the thread did not break. He saw the day when this people would be a balance of power to come to its defense. The Book of Mormon prophecies concerning the future of America have been referred to in our hearing during this conference, wherein it is stated that this nation, though it becomes a mighty nation, still it can stand in security here only as it serves the God of this land. That conception was in the hearts of the men who founded America.

-Melvin J. Ballard, [Conference Report, October 1928, p. 108](#)

The most sacred privilege granted us was the right of franchise by which every citizen was entitled to cast his ballot for the men who were to represent him in enacting and administering the law. It is upon the proper use of this sacred heritage, bequeathed to us by our fathers, that the perpetuity of our government depends. It may declare war or maintain peace, it may bring peace and good order to society, or tribulation, confusion and final dissolution. It controls your property and mine. We come or go at its behest. Our very life depends upon the proper use of it.

-Anthony W. Ivins, [Conference Report, October 1928, p.16](#)

Another period has arrived when the people of the United States are to elect men who are to represent them... If reports which come to us are true, vast sums of money are being collected to be used for the

purpose of influencing the vote of the people in favor of one or the other of the great parties that are striving for the control of government... Can it be possible that we have reached a point in our history when the ballot, this sacred heritage which has come to us from our fathers, has become a thing of barter and trade, that it can be purchased with money? Are the liberties of the American people on the auction block to be sold to the highest bidder? Have we lifted up a golden calf (as ancient Israel did) to which the American people are commanded to bow down in worship? God forbid.

-Anthony W. Ivins, [Conference Report, October 1928, p.17](#)

To my mind the man who would sell his vote for money should forfeit his franchise forever. Is the man who sells his vote less guilty than the man who tenders money for it? Is he who tenders money less guilty than the individual who, having knowledge of the crime, enters no word of protest? I cannot shift the responsibility from one to the other. All are equally guilty.

-Anthony W. Ivins, [Conference Report, October 1928, p.17](#)

We are in as great danger as any nation that has ever lived, because God has given us more than any other nation, and if in arrogance and in pride we turn aside from the Father of us all, and in our carelessness and indifference towards sacred things we spend our lives for the things of this world, it will not be very long until the chastening hand of an all-wise Father may come upon us as a nation, and we be counted as the nations of the past, among those that have withered away. I pray that we may be worthy of our heritage...

-George Albert Smith, [Conference Report, October 1928, p. 94](#)

Laws which are enacted for the protection of society have no value except when they are administered in righteousness and justice, and they cannot be so administered if dishonest men occupy administrative offices... Without beneficent laws, righteously administered, the foundations of civilization crumble, anarchy reigns, decay and dissolution follow.

We call upon all members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints throughout the world to honor the laws of God, and obey and uphold the law of the land; and we appeal to good men and women everywhere, regardless of creed, party affiliation, race or condition, to join with us in an effort to put into operation the words of Lincoln, the great emancipator, that our country may continue to be a light to the world, a loyal, law-abiding, God-fearing Nation.

-First Presidency Letter, [Conference Report, October 1928, p. 16](#)

I have been preaching against Communism for twenty years. I still warn you against it, and I tell you that we are drifting toward it more rapidly than some of us understand, and I tell you that when Communism comes, the ownership of the things which are necessary to feed your families is going to be taken away from us. I tell you freedom of speech will go, freedom of the press will go, and freedom of religion will go.

I have warned you against propaganda and hate. We are in the midst of the greatest exhibition of propaganda that the world has ever seen, and all directed toward one end. Just do not believe all you read.

-J. Reuben Clark, [Conference Report](#), October 1941, p. 16

Quoted by Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1963, p. 111](#)

Communism and all other similar *isms* bear no relationship whatever to the United Order. They are merely the clumsy counterfeits which Satan always devises of the gospel plan. Communism debases the individual and makes him the enslaved tool of the state to whom he must look for sustenance and religion; the United Order exalts the individual, leaves him his property, “according to his family, according to his circumstances and his wants and needs” (D&C 51:3), and provides a system by which he helps care for his less fortunate brethren; the United Order leaves every man free to choose his own religion as his conscience directs. Communism destroys man’s God-given free agency; the United Order glorifies it. Latter-day Saints cannot be true to their faith and lend aid, encouragement, or sympathy to any of these false philosophies. They will prove snares to their feet.

-First Presidency Message, [Conference Report, April 1942, p. 90](#)

Every faithful Latter-day Saint believes that the Constitution of the United States was inspired of God, and that this choice land and this nation have been preserved until now in the principles of liberty under the protection of God.

-Heber J. Grant, [Conference Report, October 1944, p. 11](#)

...I am sure that all Latter-day Saints must believe that their religion imposes on them the sacred obligation of trying to be good citizens of the country under whose flag they live. In this country – the United States – this obligation, among other things, entails the duty to vote in elections for public officers. And for whom should they vote? Obviously for those capable people who, they believe, will be true, if elected, to their oaths of office; those who will uphold the Constitution of the United States and the laws made in harmony with it. To do this is a duty that every loyal citizen of this country should feel honor-bound to discharge. The safety and perpetuity of our constitutional form of government demands it, so historians tell us.

-Joseph F. Merrill, [Conference Report, October 1949, p. 35](#)

I thank God for freedom – the right of choice. I am grateful for this great nation in which we meet. Every true Latter-day Saint throughout the world loves the U.S.A. The Constitution of this land is part of every Latter-day Saint’s religious faith.

-Ezra Taft Benson, [Conference Report, April 1962, p. 103](#)